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**A DISCOURSE ANALYSIS OF SINO-VATICAN RELATIONS, 1949-1958
THE EVOLUTION OF A LONG-STANDING STALEMATE**

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**A DISCOURSE ANALYSIS OF SINO-VATICAN
RELATIONS, 1949-1958:**

THE EVOLUTION OF A LONG-STANDING STALEMATE

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Abstract

The question of this thesis is why the Vatican and China severed diplomatic ties in the 1950s to the extent that over 60 years later they still have not reached a rapprochement. In previous literature, this long-term stalemate was often regarded as the result of ‘incompatible identities’ (communism versus theism) between the PRC and the Vatican. However, this thesis argues that this rigid view of identity has led to a highly oversimplified and biased understanding of Sino-Vatican relations – the agency of Beijing and Rome in Sino-Vatican interactions was ignored.

To get a deeper insight into the current stalemate in Sino-Vatican relations, we must return to the early period (1949-1958) in Beijing and Rome’s history of interaction and discuss why the stalemate was formed in the first place. In order to do so, this thesis covers major ‘flashpoints’ in Sino-Vatican relations from 1949-1958 and analyses the key texts from both Beijing and Rome. Borrowing from Laclau and Mouffe’s discourse theory, the dialogue between China and the Vatican will be regarded as the two states’ efforts to claim and fix the meanings of certain key signifiers in their discourse by forming ‘chains of equivalence’. This thesis uses a considerable amount of de-classified archival material on the Chinese side that has never been revealed before, which provides rich evidence to support a new interpretation of Sino-Vatican relations.

The thesis concludes that the stalemate in Sino-Vatican relations can be attributed to Beijing and Rome’s mutual misunderstanding of each other’s key signifiers. The original contribution of this case study to IR theory and discourse theory is an analysis of how key signifiers in a state’s discourse matter and can cause serious misunderstandings. To avoid this kind of impasse, it is essential to precisely analyse the meaning of key ideological signifiers in state interactions and diplomacy.

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1. Introduction

1.1 Overview: the Two Deadlocks

In 1951, soon after the founding of the People's Republic of China (PRC), the papal internuncio in China was expelled from the Chinese mainland. Since then, all formal diplomatic ties between China and the Vatican were broken. Up to the time of this research, the two countries still have not reached a rapprochement. The long period of an absence of formal relations between the PRC and the Vatican is quite unusual in today's context, considering that both parties are important actors in the world scene. One of them is the most prominent emerging superpower, while the other is the heart of worldwide Catholicism. This is not to mention that China now has a burgeoning Catholic community whose number has now surpassed that of Ireland.

More than 60 years later, the PRC and the Vatican still have not resumed their diplomatic ties even though there would be great benefits for both parties in doing so. For instance, the Holy See could extend its pastoral care to Catholics in mainland China and preach the gospel more efficiently there. On the other hand, with a rapprochement, the PRC could win the hearts and minds of millions of Chinese Catholics domestically, and greatly elevate its international reputation. In fact, both parties have made many attempts to improve relationships in the past two decades. The PRC mentioned several times through official media its willingness to talk with the Vatican.¹ At the

¹ For example, on 25 Oct 2001, the spokesperson from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFA) of China said: 'China is willing to improve relationships with the Vatican and there are no changes to the two principles reiterated before.'

same time, the Popes have issued many letters which encourage Chinese Catholics to love their own country and appeal for reconciliation². However, despite all the benefits of reconciliation, PRC-Vatican relations still have not reached any formal rapprochement. There have been signs of reconciliation between them, but such contacts were often eclipsed by quarrels and mutual boycotts.

Currently, the stalemate between the PRC and the Vatican is focused on two issues. The first issue is the Vatican's diplomatic ties with Taiwan. The Holy See's diplomatic relationship with Taiwan is a remnant of the Rome-

From: Xiao Feng, 'MFA: China is willing to improve relationships with the Vatican, no changes to the two principles', *China Daily (Chinese Online Version)*, 25 Oct 2001, <http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/gb/doc/2001-10/25/content_12090.htm>

[accessed 12 Sep 2016].

On 23 Jan 2007, the spokesperson from the MFA stated: 'China always pays attention to the improvement of Sino-Vatican relations and makes efforts to reach this goal. Based on the two principles, China is willing to keep in contact with the Vatican and conduct dialogues, in the hope of finding out a way to improve relationships.'

From: The State Council Information Office of the PRC, 'The spokesperson of the MFA, Liu Jianchao, answered questions during press conference, 23th January', *The Official Website of the State Council Information Office*, 24 Jan 2007

<<http://www.scio.gov.cn/xwfbh/gbwxfbh/fbh/Document/310641/310641.htm>>

[accessed 10 Sep 2016].

² Here are two examples: Pope John Paul II, 'Message of the Holy Father John Paul II to the Catholic Church in China (8 Dec 1999)', [The Official Website of the Holy See]

<http://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/en/messages/pont_messages/1999/documents/hf_jp-ii_mes_19991210_china.html>

[accessed 10 Sep 2016].

Pope John Paul II, 'Messaggio di Giovanni Paolo II nel 70° dell'ordinazione a Roma del primo gruppo di vescovi cinesi e nel 50° dell'istituzione della gerarchia ecclesiastica in Cina (24 Oct 2001)', [The Official Website of the Holy See]

<https://w2.vatican.va/content/john-paul-ii/it/messages/pont_messages/1996/documents/hf_jp-ii_mes_19961203_china-church.html> [accessed 10 Sep 2016].

Nanjing relationship. In 1946, the Holy See sent the first Apostolic Internuncio, Antonio Riberi to China and the first Apostolic Nunciature was opened in Nanjing, the then capital of China. After the Chinese Civil War (1946-1949), the KMT were defeated and lost control over the Chinese mainland. However, the ROC government, having moved to Taipei, never renounced its claim over the whole of China. In 1971, the ROC's representative to the United Nations was expelled by General Assembly Resolution 2758 and henceforth China's UN seat was transferred to the PRC. After Taipei lost the UN seat, its international status suffered a dramatic fall as most states around the world shunned Taipei and switched their recognition to Beijing. In the year 2016, only 22 states formally recognized the ROC, most of which are in Africa and Latin America, with the Holy See being Taiwan's last diplomatic stronghold in Europe. On the other hand, the 'One-China Policy' is one of the fundamental principles of Beijing's diplomacy, according to which the PRC will refuse to build/maintain ties with any states that recognise Taiwan. Such a principle certainly applies to Sino-Vatican relations, and it is highly unlikely that the two countries can build any formal ties before the Holy See cuts off its diplomatic relationship with Taipei.

The second 'deadlock' between Beijing and Rome is the consecration of bishops. The Vatican sternly insists that only the Pope has the right to appoint bishops. On the other hand, the PRC government strongly opposes the assertion that the Vatican has such rights in mainland China. Since 1949, the PRC and the Vatican have quarrelled numerous times over the issue of appointment of bishops. It seems that both sides do not want to make significant compromises on this matter. For example, from late 2010 to 2012, the officially-sanctioned church in China unilaterally appointed several bishops (Leshan, Shantou, Chengde and Harbin) without the Holy See's consent. Rome warned the various episcopal candidates many times not to accept the officially-sanctioned church's consecration. But the

officially-sanctioned church ignored the Vatican's warnings and the bishops of these cities were consecrated without papal mandate. The Vatican then issued statements bitterly protesting against these consecrations.³ In reply, the officially-sanctioned church also made statements against the Vatican.⁴

The series of incidents and disputes about the episcopal consecrations clearly shows how fragile and unstable Sino-Vatican relations are. However, before these unhappy events, from 2005 on, Sino-Vatican relations had shown some signs of rapprochement. In 2007, Pope Benedict XVI issued a long letter⁵ to Catholics in the People's Republic, in which he pointed out that the current stalemate is harmful both to the church and to the PRC government. The Pope reiterated that to change the secular political structure is not the mission of the Catholic Church and expressed his strong wish to realise a reconciliation with the PRC government. In 2009, the Vatican published a brand-new Chinese version of their official website (vatican.va). Chinese thus became the only non-European language

³ The Union of Catholic Asian News (UCAN) published the Chinese version of the statement made on 3 Jul 2012 by The Congregation for the Evangelization of Peoples. In the statement the Holy See protested about the recent consecration in Harbin and reiterated that Fr. Yue Fusheng, who was consecrated by the official church, is now liable to the punishments stipulated by Church Laws. From: UCAN, 'the Vatican issues a statement regarding the oncoming illicit consecration in Harbin', *UCAN Chinese*, 4 Jul 2012, < <http://china.ucanews.com/2012/07/04/> 【文件】梵蒂岡對哈爾濱將舉行非法祝聖發表聲明 / > [accessed 13 Sep 2016].

⁴ UCANEWS, 'Vatican statement 'outrageous': Govt Says self-election and self-ordination will continue despite threats from Rome', *ucanews.com*, 4 Jul 2012, < <http://www.ucanews.com/news/vatican-statement-outrageous-and-shocking-govt/54590> > [accessed 13 Sep 2016].

⁵ Pope Benedict XVI, 'To the Bishops, Priests, Consecrated Persons and Lay Faithful of the Catholic Church in the People's Republic of China' (2007) [The Holy See's Official Website] <https://w2.vatican.va/content/benedict-xvi/en/letters/2007/documents/hf_ben-xvi_let_20070527_china.html> [accessed 19 Sep 2016].

offered by the official website of the Holy See. On 7 May 2008, on China's initiative, the China Philharmonic Orchestra (CPO) made a historic visit to Vatican City. In the Paul VI audience hall, the CPO staged a concert in front of Pope Benedict XVI, in which they performed Mozart's Requiem and several pieces of traditional Chinese music. The Chinese ambassador to Italy, Sun Yuxi, was also present at the event. After the concert, the Pope shook the hands of the conductor and other members of the orchestra, greeted them in Chinese and gave a speech, in which he expressed his good wishes that China would hold a successful summer Olympic Games.⁶ This event received widespread media coverage in both China and the West. The Xinhua News Agency, the official press agency of the PRC government, defined the concert as 'historic' and 'icebreaking' in its news articles.⁷ From 2006 to 2010, the Vatican endorsed many bishops appointed by the officially-sanctioned church⁸ and the majority of bishops appointed in this period tended to have approval from both sides.

Unfortunately, all these positive signs and exchanges of goodwill ended up with bitter quarrels. Since late 2010, Sino-Vatican relations again returned to stalemate. Hearing about the Sino-Vatican dispute over consecrations, Ren Yanli, a scholar of Religious Studies and a previous member of the Chinese Social Science Academy, expressed his disappointment in an

⁶ Xinhuanet, 'the CPO enchanted the Vatican, the Pope gave a speech blessing the Olympic Games', *Xinhuanet*, 10 May 2008, <http://news.xinhuanet.com/audio/2008-05/10/content_8142157.htm> [accessed 13 Sep 2016].

⁷ Xinhuanet, 'the CPO will stage a historic performance in the Vatican', *Xinhuanet*, 4 May 2008, <http://news.xinhuanet.com/audio/2008-05/04/content_8098200.htm> [accessed 13 Sep 2016].

⁸ For example, Li Shan, the Bishop of Beijing (consecrated 21 Sep 2007); Gan Junqiu, the Bishop of Guangzhou (consecrated 4 Dec 2007) Cai Bingrui, the Bishop of Xiamen (consecrated 14 May 2010).

interview with Catholic News Asia: 'the four years (of reconciliation efforts) is now in vain!' ⁹ He pointed out that:

'The dispute over the Chinese bishops' appointment again breaks out. It is just like an old drama shown repeatedly for over 60 years, which makes its audience sick. The story is always the same: China would unilaterally appoint a bishop, whose consecration ceremony would have to be "escorted and protected" by a large swarm of officials. The Vatican then would issue a statement in protest, which would be criticised by the Chinese authority. After the event, several bishops participating the event would repent of their deeds to the Vatican. The Catholics in China would be deeply upset by the dispute.' ¹⁰

Indeed, Ren's comment is a good description of a 'typical round' of the Sino-Vatican conflict. The PRC-Vatican stalemate is characterised by a stereotypical pattern of conflict. We can observe repetitively from their interactional history, that the PRC and the Vatican always quarrel over the same issues with an almost identical pattern. The conflict usually starts with a unilateral act of consecrating bishops from one party, which is quickly followed by bitter accusations from the other side. Both sides will then strengthen their gestures and stances, which quickly escalates the conflict. The confrontation usually ends up with a propaganda war and the PRC government's house arrest of the pro-Vatican priests. This is followed by religious penalties and excommunications on the Vatican's part. It seems that the two countries are locked into a vicious circle, in which the mutual trust and goodwill accumulated over four or five years would suddenly be destroyed in an outbreak of wrangling. After China's re-opening to the world

⁹ UCAN, 'China observer points out that the consecration in Chengde is "inexplicable"', *UCAN Chinese*, 3 Dec 2010, < <http://china.ucanews.com/2010/12/03/> 【特稿】中國觀察家直指承德祝聖禮「莫名其妙」 /> [accessed 13 Sep 2016].

¹⁰ Yanli Ren, 'Again – Sino-Vatican conflict: my feelings', *UCAN Chinese*, 25 Jul 2012, < <http://china.ucanews.com/2012/07/25/> 【評論】任廷黎：又見衝突有感 /> [accessed 13 Sep].

in the late 1970s, the two countries made many attempts to engage with each other. The diplomatic efforts of this period culminated in the visit to Beijing in 1987 of the Archbishop of Manila, Cardinal Jaime Sin, who was received by the then Chinese Communist Party General Secretary, Zhao Ziyang. However, the furthering of dialogue in the two decades always led to unexpected serious conflicts.

It would not be fair to say that the two countries did not make efforts to improve their relationship, only that their efforts over the past forty years have been almost fruitless. The stalemate continues to exist and trouble the Sino-Vatican relationship and seems to be reinforced by every new quarrel. What is also surprising is that the main patterns of the stalemate have not changed much in the past 60 years, despite the great changes that have occurred in the two countries and in the entire world. Six decades ago, the world was at the dawn of the Cold War. The People's Republic of China was a newly established republic deeply wounded by the devastating Civil War while the Holy See was finding its position in a post-World War II world. However, over the next 60 years, the two countries and the entire world have undergone great changes that were hard to imagine by previous generations. Despite these changes, the basic patterns of the Sino-Vatican stalemate still have not changed. Why is this so? Why can China and the Vatican not build a stable relationship when many former sworn enemies have become friends?

Many scholars have discussed the reason why the PRC and the Vatican still cannot normalise their relationship. Usually, they see the current situation

of the PRC-Vatican relationship as the result of 'different concepts'¹¹, the Chinese tradition of ruling without external interference¹², the oppressive nature of an atheist/communist regime and its ideology¹³, and conflicting authorities¹⁴. However, almost all the observers studied the relationship from a 'rationalist perspective'. The term 'rationalist' is the opposite of its 'constructivist' counterpart. In the study of International Relations (IR),

¹¹ For example, Cindy Chu argues: 'it is very difficult for the Vatican to establish diplomatic relations with China, as both sides embrace different concepts.' From: Cindy Chu, *The Catholic Church in China: 1978 to the Present*. (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2012), p.7.

¹² Cindy Chu comments on the official church's unilateral consecration: 'This resulted from Beijing's refusal to have Chinese people - namely, Catholic converts - pledging loyalty to an external force, the Roman Catholic Church.' (Chu, p.13) She also summarises at the end of her book: 'China has always been suspicious of foreign interference in its domestic affairs.' (Chu, p.134.)

¹³ For example, Mariani argued, based on his interpretation of party documents, that the ultimate goal of the Chinese Communist Party is to destroy the whole Catholic Church in China: 'So what did the regime want? Party documents answer the question. By 1959, the CCP would tacitly admit that, once the regime was strong enough, it would actually destroy the church.' (p.4.) 'But why did the CCP consider the Shanghai Catholic community its enemy? There were two major reasons for this. First, Marxists were atheists who wished to liberate their compatriots from the idols of their own making.... Second, playing the nationalist card, the CCP knew the growth of Catholicism in China was a mixed legacy...' (pp.3-4.). From: Paul P. Mariani, *Church Militant: Bishop Kung and Catholic Resistance in Communist Shanghai* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2011).

Leung argues: 'In a Communist party state, due to ideological differences (atheism vs theism), the political leaders always have problems in dealing with a universal religion.' From: Beatrice Leung, *Sino-Vatican Relations: Problems in Conflicting Authority 1976-1986* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), p.5.

¹⁴ For example, Leung argues that 'The Chinese government looks at the whole thing from political and cultural points of view and would regard acknowledging that mainly the moral and to some degree the temporal authority rested with a foreign state - i.e. the Vatican - as an act of counter-revolution, because the Chinese political leaders would not allow their authority to be shared with a religious leader such as the Pope.' (Leung, p.147) 'After surveying religious problems in China over the last forty years, one may feel that it is the Magisterium (the authority to teach) that has been the main reason for church-state conflict in PRC.' (Leung, p.340).

Alexander Wendt used the term 'rationalist' to define the traditional school of IR thought, especially the dominant neo-realism. Wendt pointed out that the major difference between the two schools is that constructivism sees identities and interests as 'processes that need to be socially sustained' while rationalism sees them as 'fixed objects that are in some sense outside of social space and time'.¹⁵ In other words, rationalists take identities and interests as given while constructivists do not. Previous studies on Sino-Vatican relations tend to adopt a rationalist view, according to which the identities and interests of China and the Vatican are given before interactions and remained constant during interactions. To be more specific, the authors of previous literature noticed that China and the Vatican held different identities (communist government vs religion), pointed out that these identities were affecting Sino-Vatican interactions, but did not explain where these identities came from. The constructivist impact of interaction on the identities of the PRC and the Vatican was ignored.

In contrast to the rationalist approaches, constructivist theory holds that identities are not pre-determined but are sustained and shaped by interactions. Therefore, from a constructivist perspective, the identities of the PRC and Vatican are "what they made of it".¹⁶ By this, I mean that they are constructed during their interaction and continue to be shaped, modified or strengthened in every interaction. This research focuses on the PRC-Vatican interactions and studies them from a constructivist perspective and the methodology of discourse analysis will be adopted.

¹⁵ Alexander Wendt, *Social Theory of International Politics* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999), p.36.

¹⁶ Alexander Wendt, 'Anarchy is What States Made of it', *International Organization*, 46 (1992), 391-425 <<http://www.jstor.org/stable/2706858>> [accessed 10 Sep 2016].

1.2 Research Question

The question of this thesis is simple, namely, how did PRC-Vatican interactions impact on their identities, and influence their relationships from 1949 to 1958? To be more specific, the focus of this thesis is the first 9 years of interaction between Beijing and Rome. On the part of China, the first time period sees the establishment of the PRC and the consolidation of the Communist Party of China (CPC)'s rule over mainland China. On the part of the Vatican, this period coincides with the last years of Pius XII's rule.

The aim of this research is to provide a new answer to old questions: Why are the PRC and the Vatican not able to trust each other and build a good relationship? Why do the two countries confront each other, and why do such confrontations escalate into conflicts in their further contacts? I argue that the current mutual distrust between Beijing and Rome originated from their pattern of interaction in the 1950s. Hence, to understand the current obstacles preventing Beijing and Rome from reaching a rapprochement, we need to understand how these obstacles were formed in the 1950s. However, before putting forward my own answers to these questions, let us first examine the previous scholarly opinions on this topic.

2. Previous academic discussions on Sino-Vatican relations

2.1. Overview of Previous Literature

Sino-Vatican relations is a ‘small’ topic and previous literature dedicated to the topic is limited. However, the paucity of literature does not mean that the richness of content is compromised. Indeed, the efforts of previous scholars have resulted in scholarly works that are interesting, informative and insightful, from which we are shown a vivid picture of Sino-Vatican relations in the past 60 years. In this chapter, I attempt to give an overview of the previous literature on Sino-Vatican relations, provide a preliminary analysis of important works in this field and point out both their contributions and limitations.

Martyrdom Literature

The first, and by far the biggest, category of existing literature could be called ‘martyrdom literature’ because it tries to reveal how Catholics in China suffered under communist rule. I define the word ‘martyrdom’ here as ‘the situation where Catholics suffer/die for the cause of Rome’.¹⁷ One example of these books is the personal account of hard times and the collection of martyrdom stories. They reflect the subjective experience of

¹⁷ Special attention should be given to the word ‘martyrdom’. The word ‘martyrdom’ here is a usage from the viewpoint of the Roman Catholic Church as different Christian denominations could have very different interpretations over the true meaning of ‘martyrdom’. For example, during the Reformation era the Protestants who died opposing the Pope could also be defined as ‘martyrs’ by their Protestant peers.

religious freedom in China, which is often not academic and contains little analysis. Su¹⁸ gives us a detailed account about the tribulations undergone by Catholics since 1949 in a chronological order. Catherine Ho¹⁹, a Catholic who spent many years in labour camps during the Cultural Revolution, narrates her life, marriage and faith in an adverse environment. The book expressed her deep loathing of the PRC government and the oppressive campaigns against Catholics in China. Father Aedan McGrath²⁰, one of the major leaders of the Legion of Mary in China, wrote about his experience in a communist prison. McGrath described his missionary efforts in China before the communist takeover and his endeavours to bring the Legion of Mary into China,²¹ his arrest by the PRC government²² and the three-year's ill-treatment he received in a prison cell.²³ In the concluding part of his book, Father McGrath used the word 'bandits'²⁴ to denote the PRC government and argued that the 'peace' promoted by Beijing is merely a method of communist infiltration.²⁵ He condemned the Chinese Catholic Patriotic Association (CPA)'s argument that 'nobody outside China'²⁶ could control or give orders to the Chinese Church. According to him, the officially-

¹⁸ Ruoyi Su, *The Historical Material of the Martyrdom in China from 1948-1957* (Taipei: Fu Jen University Press, 2000).

¹⁹ Catherine Ho, *The Lark and the Dragon: Experiences of a Chinese Women Prisoner of Conscience* (Taipei: Caritas Printing Training Centre, 1996).

²⁰ Aedan McGrath, *Perseverance through Faith: A Priest's Prison Story* (Bloomington: Xlibris, 2008).

²¹ Ibid., pp. 13-35.

²² Ibid., pp. 54-63.

²³ Ibid., pp. 112-197.

²⁴ Ibid., p. 203.

²⁵ Ibid., p. 203.

²⁶ Ibid., p. 207.

sanctioned church 'is a façade'.²⁷ In sum, despite their subjective nature, these books often contain valuable first-hand experience and historical material, which is useful to research projects on Sino-Vatican relations.

The second type of 'martyrdom literature' sees academic studies of good quality. They are systematic studies of Catholics' efforts to resist Beijing's iron fist and their suffering under communist rule. The writers of these books studied the suppression of the Catholic Church and the tribulations of Catholics in China from an academic perspective. Myers' book *Enemies Without Guns* is the first comprehensive academic study²⁸ of the PRC's campaign against the Catholic Church in the 1950s. As the name of the book suggests, Myers focused on the enmity between the PRC government and the Catholic Church and tried to show the brutality of the PRC's campaigns against the Catholic Church. According to Myers, even before 1949, the communist Party of China (CPC)²⁹ had begun to persecute Catholics in communist-controlled areas.³⁰ Anti-religious tendency is an inherent part of Mao's and the CPC's ideology,³¹ under the guidance of which the communists started a campaign aimed at destroying the Catholic Church.³² The Catholic Church suffered greatly under Mao's regime, foreign missionaries were expelled and pro-Vatican priests were jailed and tortured.

²⁷ Ibid., p. 208.

²⁸ James T. Myers, *Enemies Without Guns: The Catholic Church in the People's Republic of China* (New York: Paragon House, 1991), p. xi.

²⁹ There are two, often interchangeable ways of translating the name of the ruling party of China in English: The Communist Party of China (CPC) or the Chinese Communist Party (CCP). In this thesis I shall use the official abbreviation – CPC. However, it should be noticed that some previous authors on this topic also used the abbreviation 'CCP'. When quoting from these authors their original wording will be retained.

³⁰ Myers, pp. 1-21.

³¹ Ibid., pp. 21-28.

³² Ibid., pp. 57-103.

But a lot of Chinese Catholics showed their strong faith in their tribulations.³³ Myers translated many original Chinese documents and texts to demonstrate the PRC's hostility towards Catholicism; the harsh treatment of imprisoned priests and the sufferings undergone by ordinary Catholics. The main arguments of Myers' book regarding the relationship between the PRC government and the Catholic Church are as follows. First, the PRC government, especially under Mao's regime, had the clear intention to destroy religions³⁴ and the campaigns against Catholicism were 'a deliberate policy conceived at the top levels of the Party and executed with ruthless single-mindedness over a period of years.'³⁵ Second, the church's hard times will continue as long as the Communist Party keeps tight political control over the Chinese people.³⁶ Third, the future of the church in China depends on the domestic politics of China and is closely related to the leadership/ideology of China and the performance of the regime.³⁷

Mariani's book *Church Militant* made a significant contribution to the historical studies of the Catholic Church in China in the 1950s.³⁸ Being one of the latest books examining the church in China, Mariani vividly illustrated the Catholic resistance against the communist government and the church's underground tactics in Shanghai under the leadership of Bishop Kung. The period covered by his book is the same as that in Myers' *Enemies Without Guns*, but Mariani's book is more systematic and rich in detail, as the writer

³³ Ibid., pp. 121 -217.

³⁴ Ibid., p. xiv.

³⁵ Ibid., p. 229.

³⁶ Ibid., p. 312.

³⁷ Ibid., pp. 318-320.

³⁸ Paul P. Mariani, *Church Militant: Bishop Kung and Catholic Resistance in Communist Shanghai* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2011).

had better access to archives and material from both the Chinese side and the church side. The aim of Mariani's book was to find out why the Catholics in the city of Shanghai were able to resist the PRC government's policies for so many years after other groups in China had long been subdued.³⁹ Mariani's narrative starts from the year 1949 when the communist army took control of Shanghai. Despite the initial peaceful coexistence with the city's population and the church, the newly established communist authority quickly started to exert pressure on the Catholic Church in terms of taxes, school curricula and religious policy.⁴⁰ Facing such a situation, the church taught Catholics 'to yield in secondary matters, but remain firm in the essentials.'⁴¹ The government then started to compel the Catholic Church in China to cut off ties with Rome. Subsequently, the newly appointed Bishop Kung encouraged the religious fervour of Shanghai Catholics⁴² and many Catholic mass organizations (including the Legion of Mary) were created in the Catholic community.⁴³ The fast expansion and the militant nature of Catholic organizations⁴⁴ quickly raised the suspicions of the communist government, which soon led to a suppression campaign against the papal internuncio,⁴⁵ the Catholic Central Bureau⁴⁶ and the Legion of Mary.⁴⁷ Massive arrests and the expulsion of missionaries occurred in the Diocese of Shanghai and an intensive propaganda war was waged against

³⁹ Ibid., p.7.

⁴⁰ Ibid., pp. 32-39.

⁴¹ Ibid., p. 38.

⁴² Ibid., p. 45.

⁴³ Ibid., pp. 46-53.

⁴⁴ Ibid., pp. 62-67

⁴⁵ Ibid., p. 69.

⁴⁶ Ibid., p. 71.

⁴⁷ Ibid., pp. 75-86.

the pro-Vatican priests.⁴⁸ In the final stage of the campaign, the government arrested Bishop Kung and forced many of his colleagues to denounce him.⁴⁹ Kung and many of his peers were tried for 'counterrevolutionary crimes' and were put into prison.⁵⁰ The Catholic Patriotic Association (CPA) was created⁵¹ under the auspices of the government and the church was rendered deeply divided until today.⁵²

To discuss the political relationship between Beijing and Rome is not the focus of Mariani's book. However, a study on the Chinese Catholic Church would inevitably touch upon Sino-Vatican relations. Mariani's viewpoint regarding Sino-Vatican relations is very similar to that of Myers. He believes that the Communist Party of China, due to its atheist nature, is a natural enemy of Catholicism and aims to destroy the church from the start. The PRC's oppressive campaigns against Chinese Catholics and foreign missionaries failed to destroy the church but succeeded in dividing it. The priests who cooperated with the PRC government caused damage to the church and hurt the feelings of Chinese Catholics. Reconciliation between 'the two churches' (open and underground) is needed. In sum, Mariani's book, alongside the one written by Myers, are the most detailed academic studies in the English language on the Chinese Catholic Church in the 1950s. Since the Chinese Church in the 1950s is the focus of my project, this thesis draws much from the two books (Mariani, Myers) but disagrees with them in the interpretation of historical events. Furthermore, this thesis will critique the conclusions drawn by Myers and Mariani in the light of a rich amount of newly discovered archival material.

⁴⁸ Ibid., pp. 109-142.

⁴⁹ Ibid., pp. 143-168.

⁵⁰ Ibid., pp. 190-205.

⁵¹ Ibid., p. 183.

⁵² Ibid., pp. 206-227.

Comment on the ‘Martyrdom Literature’

The ‘martyrdom literature’ narrates the twists and turns of the Catholic Church in China from the perspective of personal/group experience. Reading these books, we can see how the mistrust between Beijing and Rome could bring great suffering to millions of Catholics in China. However, there are two questions awaiting answers: Why did Rome and Beijing become enemies (in the 1950s)? Were the conflicts between them really inevitable? If we follow the discourse of the ‘martyrdom literature’, the following conclusions could be drawn:

First, the PRC is a staunch atheist and communist state that has no common ground with Catholicism. Second, the PRC is determined to destroy the Church in China. Third, Chinese Catholics should follow the examples of martyrs in the 1950s, showing their faith to Rome despite suffering trials and tribulations. There is ‘no fellowship between light and darkness’ and Catholics should never cooperate with the Patriotic Association (CPA), which is a schismatic movement against the Pope.

However, this thesis argues against the above conclusions for an important reason – I argue that the mind-set behind the ‘martyrdom literature’ is mainly based on a highly oversimplified and demonized image of Beijing in the 1950s. The narratives in previous literature are one-sided and do not shed light on the nuances of Beijing’s policymaking regarding the Catholic Church. Here, I would like to quote the words on the back cover of Father McGrath’s book, which is a good example of this rigid, anti-Beijing mind-set:

‘Father W. Aedan McGrath took on a regime that knew no limit to its hatred and vengeance. Now, almost sixty years later, people in the West are looking with different

eyes toward Communist China and its booming economy... The China before us here and now is the China, still, in part, rooted in the drama of Father McGrath.’⁵³

In other words, in the mind of many writers of ‘martyrdom literature’, even today’s China, despite its reforms and economic growth, is still a regime that cannot be separated from its radical communist past and its inherent enmity towards religions. Therefore, the Sino-Vatican enmity in the 1950s was unavoidable and it would be unwise for the Vatican to make any compromise regarding the officially-sanctioned church in China. According to this mind-set, there are not many things that the Vatican could do. As long as the ‘brutal regime’ in Beijing continues, the church in China cannot expect better treatment. This reasoning is simple and seems convincing to many people in the West – but can we really ignore the Vatican’s agency in Sino-Vatican relations? Is ‘waiting until the communist regime collapses’ really a good option for Rome?

To conclude, the ‘martyrdom literature’ tells us a lot about the tragedy of Chinese Catholics in the 1950s but does not tell us how the long-standing conflict between Beijing and Rome had been formed in the first place. Instead of seeking to find the deeper roots of the Sino-Vatican stalemate, the ‘martyrdom literature’ attributes all the suffering of Chinese Catholics to the atheist nature of the communist regime. It is interesting to think how these books would influence Rome’s China policy if the Vatican’s decision-makers drew their impressions of China mainly from such books.

Biographies/Memoirs of Important People

Apart from ‘martyrdom literature’, the second category of the previous literature is the biographies and memoirs of key persons in Sino-Vatican relations. These works more or less reflected the authors’ understandings

⁵³ McGrath, back cover.

of global communism and the regime of Beijing. For example, the architect of Rome's *Ostpolitik* (Eastern Policy), Cardinal Casaroli, has written a book,⁵⁴ *Il martirio della pazienza*, which is a valuable account of the Vatican's foreign policy towards the communist states in the latter years of the Cold War.

In his book, Casaroli expressed his views of communism. According to him, at the time when the Holy See started to engage with the communist states, communism still looked powerful and stable. In every aspect, the communist states in Europe that were established after the first and second World War continued to exist decades after their foundation. And the people in these countries seemed willing to follow the Communist Party and give the party support.⁵⁵ On the one hand, the Western states did not have a strong and collective will to act against the communist bloc. On the other hand, there was no strong opposition force inside the Communist states and the Western states did not give effective help to the opposition force.⁵⁶

Casaroli further discussed whether there could be a version of non-atheist communism (*un comunismo non ateo*).⁵⁷ According to him, communism claims itself to be 'scientific' and made the promise of realizing a communist paradise in the world. Those who refuse to accept the communist paradise are considered as 'reactionaries' who will spare no efforts to prevent the realization of the communist society. Hence the vanguards, intellectuals and workers should struggle against the reactionaries with an 'iron fist' when

⁵⁴ Agostino Casaroli, *Il martirio della pazienza: la Santa Sede e i paesi comunisti, 1963-89* (Turin: Einaudi, 2000).

⁵⁵ Ibid., p.32.

⁵⁶ Ibid., p.39.

⁵⁷ Ibid., p.29.

necessary.⁵⁸ On the way to communism there would be some recalcitrants who would draw people away from the communist paradise on earth. And followers of religion are certainly among these recalcitrants because the promise made by religion, concerning life after death, is totally incompatible with communism's promise on earth. The Catholic Church, in the eyes of the communist states, is systematically diffusing the 'opium' amongst the people. The church's teaching of 'loving your enemies' is in direct opposition to communism's teaching about class struggle.⁵⁹ The communists accused the church of maintaining an unequal social order and declared the church to be a dangerous enemy, against which an iron fist should be used. However, in their campaigns against the Catholic Church, the communist governments always claim that they are acting against 'anti-state activities' instead of cracking down on religious activities. In short, Casaroli's evaluation of the communist government more or less represented the general view held by Vatican high officials towards the states ruled by communist parties, including the PRC.

Apart from Cardinal Casaroli's book, many other biography/autobiography works offer different perspectives and personal accounts regarding the relationship between Rome and Beijing. Coppa, in his biography⁶⁰ of Pope Pius XII, discussed Pius XII's China policy in the 1950s and its implications. Two prominent bishops in China, Bishop Dominic Tang⁶¹ and Bishop

⁵⁸ Ibid., p.31.

⁵⁹ Ibid., p.33.

⁶⁰ Frank J. Coppa, *The Life and Pontificate of Pope Pius XII: between History and Controversy* (Washington: The Catholic University of America Press, 2013).

⁶¹ Dominic Tang, *How Inscrutable His Ways!: Memoirs* (Hong Kong: Condor Production Limited, 1994).

Aloysius Jin Luxian⁶² published their autobiographies, which contain a wealth of historical material on the situation of the church during the 1950s and the 1980s.

DiGiovanni's study on the life of Cardinal Ignatius Kun Pin-mei filled a biographical niche about the only Cardinal created in mainland China after 1949.⁶³ The author stated in the foreword that the purpose of his writing was to advocate Bishop Kung's canonisation. Starting with Bishop Kung's Christian name 'Ignatius',⁶⁴ DiGiovanni highly praised Kung's loyalty to the Holy See and compared him to Saint Ignatius of Antioch and Saint Ignatius of Loyola. According to DiGiovanni, Bishop Kung's life perfectly illustrated that 'one can be both a faithful Catholic and a faithful citizen'.⁶⁵ He prayed for the opening of Bishop Kung's Cause of Canonisation and 'for China'.⁶⁶ DiGiovanni's book reviewed the entire life of Bishop Kung. Tracing back to the early life of Bishop Kung, DiGiovanni pointed out that Kung had a clear sense of right and wrong since childhood⁶⁷. After Kung's seminary formation, he was appointed as the first Bishop of Shanghai with Chinese Nationality.⁶⁸ After the founding of the PRC, Kung became the leader of the Catholic resistance in Shanghai.⁶⁹ His non-compromising attitude towards

⁶² Luxian Jin, *The Memoirs of Jin Luxian Chinese Version: Vol.1* (Hong Kong: Hong Kong University Press, 2013).

⁶³ Stephen M. DiGiovanni, *Ignatius: The Life of Ignatius Cardinal Kung Pin-mei* (Scotts Valley, California: CreateSpace, 2013).

⁶⁴ Ibid., p.i.

⁶⁵ Ibid.

⁶⁶ Ibid., p.ii.

⁶⁷ Ibid., p.2.

⁶⁸ Ibid., pp.11-14.

⁶⁹ Ibid., pp. 38-59.

the communist government led to his arrest and trial.⁷⁰ In the 30-year-long imprisonment, Kung showed his outstanding perseverance in faith and loyalty towards Rome by refusing again and again to collaborate with the government in exchange for liberty.⁷¹ In the late 1980s Kung was finally released by the PRC government and exiled to the US.⁷² DiGiovanni narrated the last years of Bishop Kung and concluded that ‘his dedication to the Catholics of Shanghai, and his decades of suffering and imprisonment made him one of the great confessors of the Faith.’⁷³

Regarding the Chinese Church, DiGiovanni’s book took a stance similar to that of the Pope before the 1960s: the ‘three-self’ movement⁷⁴ in the Chinese Church after 1949 is a schismatic move against the Pope.⁷⁵ Only the underground church is truly loyal to Rome; the PRC government is the enemy of Catholicism. DiGiovanni praised Kung’s repeated refusal to cooperate with the government and his uncompromising attitude towards the officially-sanctioned church and seminaries.⁷⁶ At the same time, DiGiovanni criticised Fr. Aloysius Jin Luxian, another prominent figure in the Diocese of Shanghai who later cooperated with the PRC government.⁷⁷ Briefly, DiGiovanni’s book, similarly to Myers and Mariani, is highly critical of the Chinese government, regarding it as a sworn enemy of Catholicism.

⁷⁰ Ibid., pp. 59-81.

⁷¹ Ibid., pp. 81-94.

⁷² Ibid., pp. 94-102.

⁷³ Ibid., p.101.

⁷⁴ ‘Three-self’ movement was initiated by Beijing in the Christian churches in China in the early 1950s. The aim was to clear the churches in China of their ‘imperialist influence’, namely their political and economic ties with the West. The literal meaning of ‘three-self’ is ‘self-preaching, self-governing and self-funding’.

⁷⁵ DiGiovanni, p.81.

⁷⁶ Ibid., p.93.

⁷⁷ Ibid., pp.93-94.

Books Studying Sino-Vatican Relations from an IR Perspective

The third category of the previous literature is the books studying Sino-Vatican relations from an IR/diplomatic perspective. The works in this category examine the relationship between the governments of the PRC and the Holy See. My current research also belongs to this category. In the study of international relations, 'Sino-Vatican relations' is a 'small' topic comparing to the 'big' topics (e.g. Sino-American relations) and the books exclusively dedicated to Sino-Vatican relations are rare. We will now give a brief outline of two milestone works in this field.

Beatrice Leung is an important author on Sino-Vatican relations from the perspective of international relations. Her book⁷⁸ *Sino-Vatican Relations: Problems in Conflicting Authority 1976-1986* is the first book-length study on the topic and still by far the most important study on Sino-Vatican relations written in English. Although her research was focused on a different historical period from this thesis, her main viewpoints were still relevant to my research. As the title of the book suggests, Leung's central argument is that the PRC and the Vatican did not manage to normalize their relationship because they were conflicting with each other over authority. To be more specific, this conflict of authority could be traced back to the pre-modern era of China. In the late-Ming dynasty (late 1500s) many local officials persecuted Catholicism and the church in China was under attack from many Confucian scholars with the fear that the foreign religion would challenge the imperial authority of China.⁷⁹ Although the Chinese emperor

⁷⁸ Beatrice Leung, *Sino-Vatican Relations: Problems in Conflicting Authority 1976-1986* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992).

⁷⁹ Ibid., p. 18.

and Catholicism enjoyed a brief period of 'honeymoon', the emperor Kangxi of Qing Dynasty banned Catholicism in China as his imperial authority was challenged by Rome in the Chinese Rite Controversy.⁸⁰ After China was defeated in the Opium War, Catholicism re-emerged in China under the protection of Western colonial powers.⁸¹ Some Catholic missionaries worked closely with the Western colonists and participated in their endeavour of colonizing China.⁸² In this period, the clergy in China consisted mainly of foreign priests. However, Rome tried to initiate the localization of the church.⁸³ Both the Chinese government and the Holy See wanted to abolish the French Protectorate of Missions in China and establish formal Sino-Vatican diplomatic ties.⁸⁴ In 1942 the two countries finally established diplomatic relations.⁸⁵

After the founding of the People's Republic, the communist government was eager to impose its authority on all aspects of social life, including religion. As the Vatican also did not want to lose its authority over the Chinese Catholic Church, the two sides fiercely contested with each other to assert their authority over the church, which led to the breaking-up of relations. After a decade of political turmoil in China, the Vatican started to make overtures to China under the policy of '*Ostpolitik*', which was greatly informed by the Holy See's experience in the USSR and other communist states in Eastern Europe. Despite having had an uneasy history⁸⁶ with the Catholic Church during the

⁸⁰ Ibid., pp. 25-29.

⁸¹ Ibid., pp.31-32.

⁸² Ibid., p. 36.

⁸³ Ibid., pp.39-40.

⁸⁴ Ibid., pp.42-43.

⁸⁵ Ibid., p.44.

⁸⁶ Ibid., pp.79-103.

Mao era, China had started its reform policies and granted more freedom to the Catholic Church in mainland China under the new religious policy.⁸⁷ But the church's freedom was still seriously constrained by the government to ensure that the government's authority was not undermined.⁸⁸ Hence, the new religious policy of China, though promising 'religious freedom' to citizens of the PRC, was still harsh towards the Catholic Church as the government refuse to share authority with the Vatican. Moving towards reconciliation would not be easy, as both sides had their own concerns⁸⁹ and did not want to renounce their authority over the Chinese Catholic Church. As a conclusion, Leung argues that the main reason for the conflict between the PRC and the Vatican is that the PRC cannot tolerate the Magisterium (teaching authority) of the Holy See.⁹⁰

Apart from Leung, two scholars from Taiwan, Chen and Jiang, who have many years of working experience in the Vatican, have also written in Chinese a comprehensive diplomatic history of relations between China and the Vatican from Taiwan's perspective. The two authors' major source of research came from Taiwan. At the time of writing, Chen was the Director of the Fu Jen Catholic Historical Institute in the Fu Jen Catholic University in Taiwan while Jiang was an editor at *Radio Vaticana*. Both writers have close connections with the Taipei's diplomats in charge of Vatican affairs. All these contributed to the academic quality of their book, which is the only book that has full and detailed coverage of the historical events that

⁸⁷ Ibid., pp. 104-138.

⁸⁸ Ibid., pp. 140-182.

⁸⁹ Ibid., pp.257-287.

⁹⁰ Ibid., p.340.

occurred in the triangular relationship between Rome, Beijing and Taipei after 1949.

Cheng and Jiang's review of Sino-Vatican history starts from pre-modern times (1200s) but focusses on modern times. The Vatican's earliest contact with the Chinese rulers can be traced back to the Yuan Dynasty.⁹¹ During the Ming and early Qing Dynasty, the Catholic Church gradually increased its influence in China, but the Chinese Rite Controversy gave the church a serious blow. After the Opium War, the church in China was under the French Protectorate.⁹² Both China and the Vatican struggled to bypass the French Protectorate⁹³ and in 1922 the Vatican managed to send Celso Costantini, the first Apostolic Delegate to China.⁹⁴ During the Sino-Japanese War (1937-1945) the second Apostolic Delegate to China, Mario Zenin, had shown an ambiguous attitude towards Japan and its puppet state – Manchukuo.⁹⁵ After WWII, the KMT government in Nanjing formally established diplomatic relations with the Holy See.⁹⁶ However, in 1949 the KMT government was defeated and lost control over mainland China. In the light of the new situation, the Holy See refused to accept the new ambassador sent by Taipei and ordered the papal internuncio to stay in mainland China. However, Sino-Vatican relations quickly deteriorated and the internuncio was expelled from the Chinese mainland in 1951.⁹⁷ In these

⁹¹ Fangzhong Chen and Guoxiong Jiang, *Sino-Vatican Diplomatic History* (Taipei: Taiwan Commercial Press, 2003), pp.36-37.

⁹² Ibid., pp.48-88.

⁹³ Ibid., pp.89-106.

⁹⁴ Ibid., pp.107-141.

⁹⁵ Ibid., pp.142-161.

⁹⁶ Ibid., pp. 184-214.

⁹⁷ Ibid., pp. 215-232.

circumstances, the Holy See resumed its relationship with Taiwan and sent the papal internuncio to Taipei.⁹⁸

Pope John XXIII used the word 'schism' to define the situation in mainland China and upgraded diplomatic relationship with Taipei from envoy level to ambassador level.⁹⁹ After the opening of the Second Vatican Council, the Pope refrained from using the word 'schism' to describe the Chinese Church, taking advice from the bishops from Taiwan.¹⁰⁰ During Paul VI's reign, the Vatican started to seek dialogue with Beijing.¹⁰¹ The Pope also expressed his support for allowing Beijing to join the United Nations.¹⁰² In 1971 Taipei was expelled from the United Nations in favour of Beijing. The Holy See quickly downgraded its ties with Taiwan by ceasing to send Papal Nuncios to Taipei.¹⁰³ Pope John Paul II 'knocked on the door of China' in 1981 with his speech in Manila.¹⁰⁴ However, the Vatican's overture towards China was interrupted by the Bishop Tang incident, in which the Vatican's appointment of the Archbishop of Guangzhou (Canton) was fiercely attacked by Beijing.¹⁰⁵ The Pope made further attempts to engage China, but none of them achieved the desired outcome.¹⁰⁶ In the meantime, Taipei expressed its deep worries about the possible rapprochement between

⁹⁸ Ibid., pp.233-254.

⁹⁹ Ibid., pp. 277-279.

¹⁰⁰ Ibid., p.297.

¹⁰¹ Ibid., pp.298-316.

¹⁰² Ibid., pp.325-328.

¹⁰³ Ibid., pp.331-340.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid., pp.354-357.

¹⁰⁵ Ibid., pp.358-366.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid., pp.367-370.

Rome and Beijing.¹⁰⁷ In the late 1980s, positive signs were shown in Sino-Vatican relations, culminating in Cardinal Sin's visit to Mainland China and his meeting with the Chinese Premier, Zhao Ziyang.¹⁰⁸ However, the 1989 Tiananmen incident again dampened the hope of a Sino-Vatican rapprochement.¹⁰⁹

2.2 Conclusion: A Rigid View of Identity

In the above part I have given a concise review of previous literature that discussed Sino-Vatican relations after 1949. To conclude, previous literature on Sino-Vatican relations could be divided into three categories, namely martyrdom accounts, biographies and IR/diplomatic studies. Most works belong to the category of 'martyrdom literature' and focus on the sufferings of Chinese Catholics in the 1950s. Among the 'martyrdom literature', two works, namely Myers' *Enemies Without Guns* and Mariani's *Church Militant*, are by far the most academic and systematic; while among the IR/diplomatic studies Leung's *Problems in Conflicting Authority* and Chen and Jiang's *A Sino-Vatican Diplomatic History* are milestone works in the field. As my research focus is on the period from 1949 to 1958, this thesis will carry out intensive dialogue and debate with the previous books that cover the same historical period (especially the works of Myers, Mariani, Jiang and Chen). However, I argue that the previous works on Sino-Vatican relations share a common, and indeed serious, shortcoming. To be more specific, the previous authors often attribute highly stereotypical identities/ideologies to China and to the Vatican and use these identities/ideologies to explain the deeds of the respective states.

¹⁰⁷ Ibid., pp.376-385.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid., pp.408-412.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid., pp.427-436.

These pre-attributed identities are so prominent in previously published literature in this field that they led to a serious oversimplification of Beijing-Rome interaction and hampered deeper understanding of Sino-Vatican relations. Let us see first how such oversimplification happens when the previous authors attribute fixed identities to Beijing – namely, the previous writers always consider the PRC as a staunch ‘communist’ and ‘atheist’ regime, and these two identities were used by previous authors to explain virtually all the conflicts between Beijing and the Catholic Church. According to the accounts of previous authors, Beijing’s ‘communist’ and ‘atheist’ identities were totally incompatible with Catholicism and the fierce clashes between the regime and the church were somewhat inevitable. For example, when Mariani was evaluating the PRC government’s harsh measures against Catholics in the 1950s, he asserted that all these measures were Beijing’s effort ‘to hasten a communist utopia’ and they were part of ‘an epic struggle between the forces of theism and atheism’.¹¹⁰ The underlying rationale of the CPC regime, as Mariani put it, lay in the fact that ‘Marxists were atheists who wished to liberate their compatriots from the idols of their own making’.¹¹¹ Another important author, Myers, also argued that the communist identity, ‘the nature of the sanctioning ideology of the PRC, namely: Marxism-Leninism-Mao Zedong Thought’ was the root of Sino-Vatican conflicts.¹¹² Myers further contended that ‘Mao Zedong’s views on religion were not different in any substantial way from those of Lenin’¹¹³ and argued that ‘much of the pattern of anti-religious activities in the early years of the USSR was to be repeated in China many years later’.¹¹⁴ In other

¹¹⁰ Mariani, p.3.

¹¹¹ Ibid.

¹¹² Myers, p.22.

¹¹³ Ibid., p.24.

¹¹⁴ Ibid., p.24.

words, Myers regarded Beijing as the same kind of regime as Moscow and attributed all the reasons for state-church conflict to Beijing's 'communist' nature. Apart from Mariani and Myers, Leung also argued in his book: 'In a Communist party state, due to ideological differences (atheism vs theism), the political leaders always have problems in dealing with a universal religion.'¹¹⁵

Hence, following the logic of these authors, as long as the 'communist' regime continued to rule China, Catholics in China could not expect better treatment. Dr. Richard Walker, in his introduction written for Myers' *Enemies Without Guns*, made such an evaluation about the prospect of the church in China: 'The story is not a pleasant one, nor are the prospects for the church in China at all encouraging as long as the Chinese Communist Party remains in power.'¹¹⁶ Regarding the goal of Beijing's Catholic policy, both Myers and Mariani argued that the communist regime's ultimate goal was to eradicate the Catholic Church in China. For example, Myers argued in the preface of his book: 'The government's effort, of which no secret was made, was to penetrate, control, and eventually eliminate religion from Chinese life.'¹¹⁷ Mariani also argued that 'the regime ultimately wanted to destroy the Catholic Church'.¹¹⁸ Based on this assumption, Beijing's iron fist attitude towards the church, according to Myers and Mariani, was long determined by the nature of the CPC even before the establishment of PRC – the harsh measures against the church after 1949 were simply the step-by-step implementation of the regime's eradication policy.

So what was the implication of such a view from previous literature of Beijing as a regime with a fixed 'communist' identity? I argue the implication was

¹¹⁵ Leung, *Conflicting Authority*, p. 5.

¹¹⁶ Myers, p.xxiii.

¹¹⁷ Ibid., p.xiv.

¹¹⁸ Mariani, p.4.

indeed great and negative. The first, and the greatest negative implication is that such a rigid view of identity led to a one-sided and highly biased report of Beijing's Catholic policy. This tendency is well illustrated by the narrative structure of the books of Myers and Mariani – both writers focused almost entirely on reporting how Beijing 'persecuted' the church, while Rome's agency in Sino-Vatican relations was largely, if not completely, ignored.

Here I will take Myers' account as an example. According to the narrative structure of his book, the CPC had some time previously begun persecution of the Catholic Church in the 'liberated areas' controlled by the communists.¹¹⁹ After the establishment of the PRC, Beijing soon started to exert pressure on church life from many angles: the government interfered with church-operated schools/universities and imposed communist propaganda on them. The church's leadership in these institutions was greatly hindered and reduced.¹²⁰ Massive seizure/occupation of church properties was carried out in China, which dealt heavy blows to the financial situation of the church.¹²¹ To make things worse, the government imposed hefty taxes and fines on the church, which impoverished the church and the clergy.¹²² Following the consolidation of the communist government, harsher measures were carried out against the church. The PRC government began to demand that the Catholic Church in China should sever its ties with the Vatican.¹²³ After a reckless campaign against Rome and the pro-Vatican priests, the church in China was finally subdued and

¹¹⁹ Myers, pp.1-17.

¹²⁰ Myers, pp. 44-48.

¹²¹ Ibid., pp. 48-51.

¹²² Ibid., pp. 51-54.

¹²³ Ibid., pp. 68-73.

the officially-sanctioned church was created.¹²⁴ However, the creation of the officially-sanctioned church was accompanied by the mass arrest and imprisonment of Chinese Catholics, many of whom later languished and died in prisons and labour camps.¹²⁵ To put it briefly, Mariani's narrative could be considered as a long list of Beijing's harsh measures against the church, which largely ignored Rome's role in this Sino-Vatican conflict. A similar narrative structure is also seen in the work of Mariani, who regarded Beijing's Catholic policy simply as a four-step approach to destroy the church, namely 'targeted attack', 'arrest and expulsions', 'assault' and 'final operations'.¹²⁶ In sum, previous literature, as exemplified by Myers and Mariani's books, depicted Sino-Vatican relations in the 1950s as Beijing's unilateral persecution of the church. But regarding the question of 'whether Rome played any role in this conflict' and 'whether interactions had any impact on Sino-Vatican relations', previous literature is largely silent and sheds almost no light on these issues.

The second negative implication of the rigid 'communist' view in previous literature is evidenced by their malevolent reading of Beijing's actions towards the church and their hasty conclusions based on scanty evidence. For example, when discussing the impact of the Korean War on Sino-Vatican relations, Myers argued that it merely gave Beijing a pretext to put pressure on the church.¹²⁷ Mariani, when evaluating the benign wording of the PRC's temporary constitution, remarked that 'the CCP would often publicly call for restraint, all the while practicing violent coercion.'¹²⁸ Both

¹²⁴ Ibid., pp.145-198.

¹²⁵ Ibid., pp.199-226.

¹²⁶ See the table of content of Mariani, p. vii.

¹²⁷ See Myers, p.67.

¹²⁸ Mariani, p.32.

Myers's book and Chen and Jiang's book held a negative opinion of Beijing's open expression of Catholic policy and regarded it as mere propaganda.¹²⁹ In discussing Beijing's attempt to establish a pro-government church in Shanghai, Mariani argued that this officially-sanctioned church was merely a 'puppet church' and those priests who joined were likely to be motivated by 'self-aggrandizement' and the 'temptations' coming from Beijing.¹³⁰ Briefly, in the eyes of many previous authors, virtually all Beijing's actions towards the church arose from extremely malicious intentions. In some cases, to support their malevolent reading of the PRC's Catholic policy, the previous authors may even make definitive claims based on scanty/anachronistic evidence. For example, when discussing whether Beijing made a genuine attempt to seek Roman approval regarding the elected vicar capitular in Shanghai in 1956, Mariani drew a hasty conclusion that Beijing was presenting a *fait accompli* to Rome – based on only two sentences from a Chinese source.¹³¹ Both Mariani and Myers highlighted the existence of a 1959 anti-religion party document to support their claim that the CCP had always been seeking to destroy the Catholic Church – regardless of the fact that this alleged party document was issued in 1959, when the PRC's overall policy was greatly radicalised due the turmoil of the Great Leap Forward. In sum, from these examples in previous literature we can see how such a rigid view of identity prevents a deeper and more balanced understanding of Sino-Vatican relations.

The third negative implication of the rigid view of identity is the insufficient attention given to the sources from the PRC government and biased attitude in data collection. Previous works derived their argument almost entirely from church sources and little attention was paid to the original historical

¹²⁹ For example, Mariani, pp.70-75. Chen and Jiang, p. 239.

¹³⁰ Mariani, p.171.

¹³¹ See section 6.4 of this thesis.

sources from the side of the PRC – let alone any in-depth analytical efforts. It could be argued that the difficulty of accessing historical archives from the Chinese side was part of the reason, however, even the key open documents (e.g. the government's open expression of Catholic policy in the early 1950s) from Beijing drew hardly any attention from previous writers – they simply mentioned these key documents briefly in their works and made hardly any analytical efforts regarding them. Indeed, such negligence largely resulted from the previous authors' highly negative view of Beijing – if Beijing was considered a villain and reckless persecutor of religion from the very beginning of the 1950s, would there be any necessity to analyse Beijing's expressions? Among previous writers in English, only Mariani made some effort to access and use historical archival sources from the side of the PRC. However, according to my point of view, Mariani's rigid view of Beijing still led to a major flaw in data collection – his focus of data collection was almost entirely on the local-level records of Beijing's harsh measures against the church. In other words, the underlying purpose of Mariani's archival research was simply to find more incriminating evidence of 'how Beijing persecuted the church' – I think this attitude in data collection was highly biased and unhelpful in presenting a balanced report to readers. It is hoped that my current project, which is based on rich sources from the Chinese side, could somehow remedy this situation and make a contribution to a more balanced understanding of Sino-Vatican relations.

The rigid view of identity led not only to an unbalanced report of Beijing's Catholic policy, but also to an idealised image of the church in China (and Rome) in the 1950s. To be more specific, previous authors more or less sympathised with the Vatican and regarded the church as an innocent martyr under a brutal regime – all the church did in the 1950s was merely to ensure her survival in China. For example, Mariani made such an evaluation regarding the Shanghai Catholics' reactions to the government: 'The CCP's ultimate goal, then, was clear. The goal of Shanghai Catholics was also

clear: to fight for survival whatever the cost.’¹³² Later on in his book, Mariani reiterated this view and argued that the only reason Catholics were found ‘guilty’ by Beijing was that they were ‘defending their church’.¹³³ In other words, in the eyes of previous authors, the church and the Vatican were purely victims in the face of Beijing the persecutor – all the actions made by the church in China and the Vatican were natural reactions towards a repressive regime while all the blame for the church’s sufferings should be laid on Beijing. In fact, such a pro-Vatican tendency is not strange – considering that most of the previous writers on this topic have a Catholic background. However, I argue that such sympathy is really unhelpful in realising a deeper understanding of Sino-Vatican relations. In fact, the relationship between Beijing and Rome, just like any other relationship, is never a unilateral matter – what the Vatican did towards Beijing in the 1950s would certainly affect the outcome of this relationship. In other words, the deterioration of state-church relationships in China should not be attributed solely to Beijing. A balanced study should shed light on Rome’s agency in this relationship.

In the above part I have provided an evaluation of previous key works on Sino-Vatican relations in the 1950s and pointed out that they share a serious shortcoming, namely the rigid view of identity. This rigid view, I argue, has led to a highly oversimplified and biased understanding of Sino-Vatican relations, which could be summarised as ‘Beijing the reckless persecutor versus Rome the innocent victim’. Such a biased understanding is the root of many significant flaws in previously published literature, namely the malevolent readings of Beijing’s Catholic policy; the one-sided account of church history in 1950s; the ignoring of historical sources from the side of Beijing; the hasty conclusions based on scanty evidence and the strong pro-

¹³² Mariani, p.5.

¹³³ Ibid., p.142.

Vatican tendency – I think all these flaws are very unhelpful in reaching a deeper, balanced and rational understanding of Sino-Vatican relations in the 1950s. By portraying the church in China as an innocent and passive sufferer and laying all the blame on the PRC government, the church's own agency and the implication of the Vatican's diplomatic policies were totally ignored. In other words, previous literature may be quite successful in conveying a demonized image of Beijing to the readers, but failed entirely to show the nuances in Beijing's Catholic policy and the impact of the interaction between Beijing and Rome – this is a huge gap left by previous work in the field and this thesis will attempt to fill it.

3. Methodology

In the last chapter I have given an overview of previous literature on Sino-Vatican relations in the 1950s and argued that their common shortcoming is the rigid view of identity. In other words, the previous authors regarded identities in Sino-Vatican relations as something pre-determined and ignored the agency of Beijing and Rome and the possibility of change. Therefore, with the objective of filling the gap, this thesis will try to discard this rigid view of identity and study Sino-Vatican relations in the 1950s from a constructivist perspective. Before carrying out the substantive study of Sino-Vatican relations in the 1950s, I will discuss in this chapter the theories, methodology and sources on which this research is based.

The first section of this chapter (3.1) discusses the question 'are Sino-Vatican relations state-to-state relations?' This is an ontological question. How we answer it will certainly affect our fundamental judgements about Sino-Vatican relations and the theories and the methodology we choose. Despite some debate about the Vatican's status as a state, I argue for an affirmative answer and assert that Sino-Vatican relations should be considered as state-to-state relations. The implication of this affirmative answer is that we will then be confident that the state-centric IR theories can be used to examine Sino-Vatican relations.

Section 3.2 attempts to connect Sino-Vatican relations with mainstream International Relations (IR) theories, I will apply mainstream IR theories to Sino-Vatican relations and evaluate their explanatory power on this issue. In saying 'mainstream IR theories', I mean three schools of IR theories, namely realism, liberalism and constructivism. The discussion in this section will show that the theories based on materialist ontology do not have enough power to explain Sino-Vatican relations. By contrast, constructivism offers us more insights into this topic. By taking a constructivist position, this thesis

argues that more attention should be paid to the identity formation process between Beijing and Rome. Based on this argument, the thesis will discuss how we should study Sino-Vatican relations in a plausible way based on a constructivist worldview.

In section 3.3, an examination of the concept of identity will be given and its connections with Sino-Vatican relations will be pointed out. The thesis will then proceed to introduce and define the idea of discourse and explain its relationship with identity. The core argument is that Beijing and Rome, as states, derive their ways of identifying from their respective discourses. In other words, their patterns of self-identification can be understood as 'snapshots' of discourse. By analysing the sources related to the important moments in Sino-Vatican interactions, we can discover the discourses behind the texts and the identity-articulation process of Beijing and Rome. After the theoretical discussion, the final section (3.4) will introduce readers to the rationale behind our selection of time periods, the sources and the analytical framework.

3.1 Are Sino-Vatican Relations State-to-state Relations?

Before applying any IR theories to the study of Sino-Vatican relations the thesis needs to discuss whether the two parties in this relationship can be qualified as 'states'. In other words, the question is 'are Sino-Vatican relations state-to-state relations?' In fact, when studying typical inter-state relations (e.g. US-China, UK-US), such discussion on statehood could be considered redundant. But in our case, the relationship between Beijing and

Rome is so unconventional, which makes a reflection on their statehood necessary.

Indeed, much ambiguity regarding this question arises from the Vatican's side, because Rome is a very peculiar participant in international politics. A discussion about the Vatican's statehood inevitably involves the definition of 'state' in international relations. Here our analysis will be based on Wendt's definition because his is a syncretisation of the major schools, namely Marxist, Weberian and Pluralist, regarding the definition of the state. According to Wendt,¹³⁴ if a political entity is to be qualified as a state, it should at least have five properties, namely '(1) an institutional-legal order, (2) an organization claiming a monopoly on the legitimate use of organized violence, (3) an organization with sovereignty, (4) a society, (5) territory.'¹³⁵

In these properties, territory is so essential to the extent that Wendt asserted that 'No territory, no state'.¹³⁶ Even if we do not take territory into consideration, the Vatican as a political entity does not seem to fit into the first four criteria of Wendt's definition. Regarding (1), the Vatican has a structure very different from other states – it does not have a fully-fledged legislature regulating secular affairs and does not own any means of production apart from a small-scale tourist economy. The Vatican does not have any armed forces apart from the ceremonial Swiss Guard. Regarding (2), the Vatican needs to rely on Italy to police the areas open to the public. In rare cases, the Vatican also needs to 'borrow' Italy's prison cells so that those judged by the Vatican as criminals could serve their terms there. Regarding (3), the Vatican does not have the right to vote in the UN; and

¹³⁴ Wendt, *Social Theory*, p. 202.

¹³⁵ Ibid.

¹³⁶ Ibid., p.211.

the Pope usually appears on the world stage as the head of Catholic Church instead of as the monarch of Vatican City State. Concerning (4), the Vatican does not have a society in the traditional sense. Indeed, with a population of less than 1000, it is hard to imagine that any well-developed 'society' in secular terms could ever be formed. Hence, judging from Wendt's 'five properties', it could be argued that the Vatican City's possessions do not make it a state. This poses a question to our study – Why not treat the Vatican as a part of the Catholic Church, or simply as an international organisation?

In fact, the Vatican is a unique actor in international politics, to the extent that it has both the characteristics of a state and an international organisation – the boundary between these two aspects is never clear-cut. Interestingly, even Rome itself holds an ambiguous attitude regarding the exact definition of the Vatican's nature. When the Vatican wants to highlight its role as the heart of Catholicism and its transcendence over secular politics, it will distance itself from the notion of a conventional state. For example, when creating diplomatic ties with other states, the Vatican would never refer to itself as 'the Vatican City State', which may convey a sense of being a secular state. Instead, the title 'the Holy See' is always used to highlight the Vatican's religious nature. When speaking about the statehood of the Vatican, Pope Paul VI stressed that the Vatican was 'one of the smallest states' (*uno dei più piccoli*) and it has only 'minuscule, almost symbolic secular sovereignty' (*minuscola, quasi simbolica sovranità temporale*). Therefore, in terms of politics, the Vatican 'has no secular power at all, nor any ambition of competing with you (the secular states)' (*Egli non ha alcuna potenza temporale, né alcuna ambizione di competere con voi.*)¹³⁷ Briefly, in international affairs, the Vatican tends to downplay its

¹³⁷ Francesco Clementi, *Città del Vaticano* (Bologna: il Mulino, 2009), p. 9.

status as a state in the traditional and secular sense and attempts to draw attention to its religious nature.

On the other hand, when the Vatican hopes to show that the papacy is not subjugated to any secular power, it emphasises the sovereignty of the Holy See and the Vatican City's status as an independent state. Such an attitude can be best illustrated by the Vatican's approach to the Italian state. In 1870, the newly founded Kingdom of Italy captured Rome and declared the Eternal City as its capital. Facing Italian occupation, Pope Pius IX protested fiercely and declared himself a 'prisoner of the Italian state' — therefore initiating a 59-year-long stalemate with the Italian regime. During the standstill, the Italian government offered a *legge delle guarentigie* (Law of Guarantees) as a proposal to solve the problem. Under this law, the Italian state promised to respect the inviolability and the honour of the Pope and to give an annual stipend to the Vatican.¹³⁸ However, the Popes refused to accept this solution because they did not want to comply with a 'law' unilaterally imposed by the Italian state. The 'Roman Question' was solved only in 1929 when the Holy See and the Italian government signed the Lateran Pacts. By these pacts, the Vatican City State was established as the basis of the Holy See's inviolable sovereignty, both in its relations with the Italian government and other secular regimes in the world. After the signing of the pacts, Pope Pius XI thus defined the significance of sovereignty based on the Vatican City State: 'a certain territorial sovereignty is the universal condition recognised by every real jurisdictional sovereignty as indispensable.' Therefore, the importance of the Vatican City State was that it provided the Holy See with 'the minimum territory which is enough to support the sovereignty itself.' (*una qualche sovranità territoriale [era] condizione universalmente riconosciuta indispensabile a ogni vera*

¹³⁸ Ibid., p.34.

sovranità giurisdizionale’) Without this territory, the Holy See’s sovereignty will have ‘no place to rest’ (*non avrebbe dove poggiare*)¹³⁹ In sum, the Vatican also regards state sovereignty as indispensable to the church’s existence as an independent actor in international politics.

As we can see from above, the Vatican itself maintains an ambiguous attitude towards its statehood — this approach could be regarded as a wise strategy that can ensure that the Holy See gets ‘the best of both worlds’: in interaction with secular regimes, the Vatican often downplays its statehood and highlights its features as a religious organisation. But when facing pressure from secular governments, the Vatican uses its statehood to defend the Pope’s independence and immunity. The peculiar nature of the Vatican is a unique phenomenon in international politics. In fact, ‘whether the Vatican is a state’ is still a matter of academic debate and scholars have not yet reached a consensus regarding the exact status of the Vatican in international politics. Some scholars argue against the Vatican’s statehood while others argue for it.

To engage in an in-depth discussion on the Vatican’s statehood is beyond the scope of this thesis. Indeed, scholars from both camps can find evidence to support their respective claims that the Vatican is/is not a state. However, in this research, I would like to side with the camp arguing in favour of the Vatican’s statehood. The reason is that the Vatican has many ‘state-like’ features that clearly distinguish it from typical international organisations. These features have exerted significant influence on Sino-Vatican relations and could be easily overlooked if we were to take a non-state approach. I shall now illustrate these state-like features of the Vatican, again drawing analogies with Wendt’s ‘five essential features’ of a state.

¹³⁹ Ibid., p.39.

The first point that distinguishes the Vatican from conventional international organisations is that it rules the worldwide church by law instead of non-binding regulations. In this sense, the Vatican is fully qualified as an ‘institutional-legal order’. Rome has fully-fledged state organs (institutions and departments) and a highly-developed legal system (Canon Law) that has high prestige in the history of Western law. The laws of the church lay out a strict hierarchical order - at the head of which is situated the Pope, who acts as an absolute monarch over the entire church. Canon Law stipulates that ‘the Roman Pontiff, by virtue of his office, not only has power in the universal church but also possesses a primacy of ordinary power over all particular churches’¹⁴⁰. The core church institutions, such as the College of Bishops and the Cardinals, all derive their authority from the Pope and could not function without the Pontiff.¹⁴¹ The Pope’s power covers not only the core institutions but also the bishops and dioceses worldwide. Canon Law specifies that ‘the Supreme Pontiff freely appoints bishops’¹⁴² and strictly excludes secular regimes from influencing episcopal appointments.¹⁴³ According to Canon Law, the Roman Curia is the means used by the Pope to carry out his policy.¹⁴⁴ Briefly, the highly centralised structure of the Catholic Church, as reflected in Canon Law, ensures that the Pope and the Roman Curia hold absolute power over other parts and institutions of the church around the world. This strictly hierarchical relationship between local units and central organs distinguishes the Catholic Church not only from other branches of Christianity but also from ordinary international organisations — the Vatican acts as the ‘central

¹⁴⁰ 1983 Code of Canon Law (CCL), c. 333, sec. 1, in Canon Law Society of America, *Code of Canon Law: Latin-English Edition* (Washington D.C: Canon Law Society of America, 1984), p. 119.

¹⁴¹ 1983 CCL, c. 336; c. 351, in *ibid.*, p. 121; p. 127.

¹⁴² 1983 CCL, c. 377, sec. 1, in *ibid.*, p.139.

¹⁴³ 1983 CCL, c. 377, sec. 5, in *ibid.*, p.141.

¹⁴⁴ 1983 CCL, c. 360, in *ibid.*, p. 131.

government' that rules the worldwide Catholic Church by law, rather than a 'headquarters' of an international organisation.

The above-mentioned hierarchical structure enables the Vatican to exert direct influence on local churches around the world. This is not to say that the Vatican prefers to take every single diocese under its absolute control — on the contrary, the local churches over the world enjoy a good degree of autonomy in most cases. It should also be noticed that the Holy See, after the Second Vatican Council, gives more freedom to local churches and actively encourages their indigenisation. However, when necessary, the Vatican can still exert a strong and direct influence on a particular local church and all its members. In fact, in its China policy, the Vatican can exert control over the local churches in China in several ways: by giving (or not giving) the means of production to them (i.e. funds and other material aids); by punishing local priests that are perceived to be deviant from Canon Law and denouncing a certain political ideology (e.g. communism) as not compatible with the Catholic religion; by promulgating the church's teaching on issues related to human reproduction (e.g. the use of contraceptives, abortion). Therefore, in the religious life of Chinese Catholics, the Vatican acts as an 'alternative institutional-legal order' whose laws and decrees are directly applicable to ordinary Catholics in China. No international organisations can do similar things and apply their laws directly to the lives of millions of Chinese citizens in the way that the Vatican does.

The second point that differentiates the Vatican from ordinary international organisations is that Rome holds the 'monopoly on the legitimate use of organised violence' that could not be shared with secular regimes. The strict hierarchy based on Canon Law ensures that the Pope should have the ultimate authority in meting out disciplinary actions against rebellious

priests. According to Canon Law,¹⁴⁵ ‘There is neither appeal nor recourse against a decision or decree of the Roman Pontiff.’ In the case of China, the Vatican can directly mete out religious punishment against groups and individuals in the Chinese Church. (e.g. excommunications to those who join the Patriotic Association; denial of Holy Communion to those who cooperated with the communists). In the latter part of this thesis, we will see that the Vatican’s monopoly on religious punitive measures was a powerful weapon against the PRC government in their conflict over the church in China — the possible excommunications against Chinese priests effectively prevent local bishops and priests from collaborating with the government. Interestingly, the Vatican’s monopoly on the use of religious punitive measures were both envied and appreciated by communist officials, who attempted to break this monopoly, or at least share some of its power (with only very limited success). In sum, Rome’s monopoly over the legitimate use of punitive measures equipped it well in its contest with the PRC government. This points further differentiates Rome from ordinary international organisations.

With regards to sovereignty, the Vatican qualifies well on this criterion. The Holy See was widely regarded as an independent sovereign actor in international politics, and the Pope enjoys the same dignity as other heads of state. In terms of citizens and culture, the tens of millions of Catholics worldwide can be considered the Holy See’s ‘spiritual citizens’ and they share a common religious culture. Indeed, in the latter parts of this thesis, we will see that Catholics in China formed a strong society based on their faith. In the conflicts between Beijing and Rome, they were often compelled to make hard choices regarding their political loyalty. Concerning Wendt’s last criterion ‘territory’, the Vatican has an effective administrative system based on division into dioceses. The authority of the dioceses largely lies

¹⁴⁵ 1983 CCL, c.333, sec. 3, in *ibid.*, 119.

with their bishops, who, in turn, were appointed by the Vatican. With the Holy See's ultimate authority over the bishops, Rome can influence many aspects of the life of the local church. To put it briefly, by drawing analogies, it can be shown that the Vatican as a state fits Wendt's 'five properties' well. However, unlike ordinary states, the Vatican state's properties in terms of 'society' and 'territory' overlap with the jurisdiction of other secular states. In Sino-Vatican relations, Beijing and Rome compete over the loyalty of Chinese Catholics and the administrative rights of local dioceses.

In the above apart, I have shown that Wendt's 'five properties of an essential state' can still be used to reveal the Vatican's key features as a state. Regarding the 'five properties', we can see that the Vatican as a state fits them well. So, if the Vatican can be considered a state, what would be the implications for the study of Sino-Vatican relations? One implication, I argue, is that we should not downplay the Vatican's statehood in the study of Sino-Vatican relations. According to my point of view, previous literature on this topic did not pay enough attention to the Vatican's statehood. This insufficient attention had led to two tendencies in this field, which I shall briefly discuss below.

The first tendency is that the previous writers often view church-state conflict in China as a 'domestic' problem, rather than an 'international' one. To be more specific, most previous books on Sino-Vatican relations have assumed that the conflict between the church and the government is all due to China's internal political circumstances and Beijing's Catholic policy. By contrast, the Vatican's agency as a sovereign state in its relationship with Beijing and with the local churches was largely overlooked. For example, Myers' book *Enemies Without Guns* dedicated most of its chapters to describing and discussing how the PRC government's domestic situation and harsh policies affected the church in China — as if the entire issue was purely a problem within the Chinese border. Following the same logic, Mariani's book, *Church Militant*, has a similar narrative structure which

‘internalised’ the state-church conflict. According to my point of view, such ‘internalisation’ is unhelpful towards a balanced understanding of Sino-Vatican relations in that it ignores the fact that the Catholic Church, unlike other religious organisations in China, can never be run without influence and directives from the Vatican. The domestic situation of China and the PRC government’s policies are not the only determinators of the relationship between Beijing and the Chinese Catholic Church.

The second tendency caused by insufficient attention being given to the Vatican’s statehood is that the previous authors often, either explicitly or implicitly, regard the Vatican as an actor not bounded by selfish state interests. In other words, previous authors often downplay the Vatican’s status as a state in international relations and focus almost entirely on its religious side. This tendency is salient in both Myers’ and Mariani’s books as both writers saw the Vatican as an innocent victim of the PRC’s persecution. Chen and Jiang, the authors of *Sino-Vatican Diplomatic History*, also claimed that the Holy See’s aim of diplomacy was to promote the peace and welfare of other states. However, I argue such ‘Vatican exceptionalism’ held by these authors does not comply with the fundamental presuppositions of mainstream IR theories — that states are selfish, interest-oriented actors in international politics. The hidden assumption of the Vatican as an ‘altruistic actor’ demonstrates the previous writers’ strong sympathy for Rome. But such sympathy is not conducive to an impartial analysis of Sino-Vatican relations. In the light of this, this thesis attempts to remedy this situation by treating both Beijing and Rome as typical, interest-driven actors in international relations.

In the above section, this thesis made two arguments. First, by drawing analogies from Wendt’s ‘five properties’, the Vatican should be considered as a state in its interactions with Beijing. Second, the downplaying of the Vatican’s statehood in previous literature prevents deeper understanding of Sino-Vatican relations from an IR perspective. In the next section I shall use

mainstream, state-centric IR theories to examine the relationship between Beijing and Rome.

3.2 IR Theories and Sino-Vatican relations

The previous section discussed whether Beijing-Rome relations are 'inter-state' and argued for an affirmative answer. Hence, after confirming the statehood of the Vatican, I will use mainstream IR theories to examine Sino-Vatican relations and see their respective explanatory power. By the word 'mainstream' I mean realism, liberalism and constructivism, which are widely accepted as the three most important schools in the study of IR. They represent different focuses in international politics. To put it very briefly, realism highlights the power politics in inter-state relationships; liberalism puts stress on interdependency, democracy and human rights; constructivism draws people's attention to the process and possibilities of change in international politics. Although IR scholars from different schools may have dramatically different viewpoints on a certain issue, there are no clear-cut lines between different schools and scholars frequently borrow from their intellectual opponents. The debates between IR scholars on issues between states give many insights and increase people's understanding of international politics.

To this day, there is still no scholarly work that contains a thorough discussion of Sino-Vatican relations in the light of different IR theories. The lack of such discussion is one of the major flaws of previous studies on the topic, which contributes to the trend of oversimplification on this topic. In the following parts I shall examine Sino-Vatican relations using concepts from the three schools respectively. The examination in this section will also lay

the foundation for subsequent parts, where the concept of identity (identification) and discourse will be discussed.

Realism and Sino-Vatican Relations

When using IR theories to study a certain inter-state relationship, realism is usually the starting point. In fact, it could be argued that realism is the most important IR tradition because the other schools are built on the critiques of it. The core concept of realism is *Realpolitik*. This concept was proposed by the first generation of realists in their criticism of so-called ‘idealism’ – a trend of thought prevalent in the times between the two World Wars. Due to the traumatic experience of Europe in the First World War, scholars and politicians had a strong desire to prevent such a disaster from happening again in the future. It was this desire that gave rise to the school of thought which was later called by realists ‘idealism’. The ‘idealists’ believed that by subjecting international politics to reason and ‘public opinion’, future great wars could be avoided. To this aim, ‘idealists’ made many attempts in the inter-war years to promote international peace – the most famous example of these attempts was the foundation of the League of Nations. However, the League of Nations, the favourite brainchild of idealists, was considered to be a complete failure in the late 1930s and was unable to prevent another World War. Thanks to this defeat, idealism was discredited in the post-WWII years and became largely a synonym of ‘naivety’. E. H. Carr, the founding father of modern realism in IR, branded it ‘utopianism’ in his famous treatise *The Twenty Years’ Crisis*.

How does this connect with the relationship between Rome and Beijing? In fact, I argue that utopianism, despite being a debunked form of thought in mainstream IR, is still visible in contemporary scholarly works on Sino-Vatican relations and can be seen in the Holy See’s China policy. So before introducing *Realpolitik* to the study of Sino-Vatican relations, it would be helpful if we have a few glances at utopian ideas on this topic. Following the

utopian line, the current stalemate between Beijing and Rome is the result of sheer irrationality on the part of Beijing. This claim was based on the assumption that the Holy See's diplomacy is unique. To be more specific, the religious and moral nature of the Vatican differs from that of secular states in that it only seeks to benefit the citizens of other states. Its foreign policy is perhaps the world's only 'altruist' diplomacy because it does not seek any selfish material gains.

Two important scholars on Sino-Vatican relations from Taiwan, Chen and Jiang, express such view in their comprehensive historical work on this topic. According to them, the Vatican is the only state that has altruist diplomacy: the goal of Rome's dealing with a secular government is not to obtain worldly interests, but to increase the welfare and happiness of the citizens in that country.¹⁴⁶ With this opinion, Chen and Jiang contend that the Vatican's only aim in its China policy was to benefit Chinese Catholics.¹⁴⁷ Hence, it is a pity that the Chinese government has been showing a cold face to the Vatican. In their work, the Chinese government was portrayed as an arrogant and irrational regime that was insensitive to religious mind-sets. In their account of the Beijing-Rome dispute over the appointment of the Archbishop of Canton in 1982, they argue that it was the Chinese government who had taken advantage of the Vatican's goodwill. The abuses from Beijing had certainly 'made the Pope suffer greatly'.¹⁴⁸ Hence, following this logic, Beijing should understand the transcendental nature of the Catholic Church and the altruist aims of the Vatican -- only then will the problems between the two states be solved.

¹⁴⁶ Fangzhong Chen and Guoxiong Jiang, *Sino-Vatican Diplomatic History* (Taipei: Taiwan Commercial Press, 2003), p.424.

¹⁴⁷ Ibid.

¹⁴⁸ Ibid., p.367.

Briefly, Chen and Jiang showed a utopian tendency in their evaluation of Sino-Vatican relations and regarded the Vatican as an altruistic actor in its dealings with the PRC government. However, such a tendency is incompatible with the fundamental presumptions of mainstream IR theories, especially realism. To be more specific, the core concept of realism is *Realpolitik*, which implies that the nature of international relations is power politics. Based on this belief, realists contend that the ultimate concern of states in international politics is, and should be, their own interests. Morality, by contrast, is at best a secondary concern of states, at worst a façade behind which states hide their selfish motives. The basis of the realists' claims is the fact that there is no world government in international politics and states can only rely on self-help to protect their interests – hence the concept of 'anarchy' in realist thinking. The world arena, in the eyes of realists, is a dangerous place where every state strives to survive. Gains for a certain country always mean relative loss for other states and the prospect of honest international cooperation is dim.

What will happen if we view Sino-Vatican relations in this way? First of all, the relationship between Rome and Beijing will become not so unique – both are driven by self-interests. It could be argued that for Rome the survival of the church and the loyalty of Catholics in secular states is its ultimate interest. In addition to that, the material basis of the church (i.e. the church institutions, properties and other assets in secular states) is also an important part of the Vatican's interests. These interests are of the Vatican's utmost concern in its dealings with secular states. By contrast, the well-being of secular governments is less important to the Vatican – when the Vatican perceives that the church's interests are not compatible with those of a secular government, it will take actions to defend the church's interests even if that means the secular government's counterpart will be undermined. And indeed, Rome fought many secular governments and undermined many rulers in the course of its history. The most famous

example in pre-modern times was perhaps the Pope's dispute with Henry IV, the Emperor of the Holy Roman Empire. Pope Gregory VII (1072-85) successfully undermined the power of Henry IV by excommunicating him. From the late 19th century on, despite the fact that the Pope had lost his secular power, the Vatican still took actions against secular states to safeguard its interests. In sum, from a realist perspective, the Vatican's aim in foreign policy is less utopian and falls short of altruism. Indeed, its aim is also motivated by self-interest and therefore not very different from the aims of secular states. In other words, out of self-interest, Rome may take hostile actions against secular governments and these actions often have undermining effects on the target government. Following such realist logic, it could be argued that the Vatican's claim of transcendence in terms of secular politics is questionable – at worst, it is only a façade covering Rome's self-interests.

In the eyes of realists, Beijing certainly is no exception to the concept of *Realpolitik*. Similar to other states, the ultimate interest of Beijing lies in the survival of the state. The Catholic Church in China, as an institution that has innate foreign connections, will certainly be subject to extra scrutiny from Beijing. From the viewpoint of realism, the expansion of the Catholic Church in China could be a potential threat to the PRC government, because the Vatican has the capability to undermine Beijing's rule using its influence over Chinese Catholics. In fact, such a threat seemed quite real to Beijing in 2014, when a large number of demonstrators launched the 'Umbrella Movement' against the PRC government and occupied the city centre of Hong Kong for three months. Cardinal Joseph Zen Ze-Kiun, an outspoken critic of the PRC government, became one of the leaders in this movement and actively encouraged Catholics to participate and protest against Beijing. Though there was no evidence of the Vatican's direct intervention in the 'Umbrella Movement', the active participation of Zen, one of the most high-

ranking clergymen in China appointed by the Vatican¹⁴⁹, would certainly convince Beijing that the church is a threat. Later on in the movement, Cardinal Zen claimed in his personal blog¹⁵⁰ that Pope Francis expressed his support for the movement implicitly during Zen's *ad limina* visit to Rome. Hence, from a realist perspective, the growth of the Catholic Church in China goes against the interests of Beijing because the Vatican, as an external power that is out of Beijing's control, may use its influence over Catholics in China to undermine Beijing's rule. Therefore, it could be argued that a zero-sum game exists between Rome and Beijing – either one's gain will entail the other party's loss. For Rome, Beijing's rule over China is an obstacle to the church's development in China; for Beijing, the church's growth in China is a potential threat. So taking hostile actions towards each other seems the only option according to each other's interests. To realise their respective interests, both states have to resort to power politics.

In the realist mind-set, power politics is the nature of international relations and Sino-Vatican relations are also governed by power. But here a question arises – what is 'power' and how should we measure power in Sino-Vatican relations? In realist thinking, 'power' was widely regarded as a state's capability to make other state(s) fulfil its desires. But as to the exact content and the measurement of power, no consensus is reached among theorists. Kenneth Waltz, one of the most prominent scholars in the realist lineage, argues that the power of a certain state should be measured by its 'combined capabilities'.¹⁵¹ To be more specific, Waltz evaluates states'

¹⁴⁹ It should be noted that thanks to Hong Kong's autonomous status as a Special Administrative Region in the PRC, the Vatican can directly appoint bishops and Cardinals without much interference from Beijing.

¹⁵⁰ Ze-Kiun Zen, 'My Rome visit was meaningful for this word of encouragement' [Cardinal Zen's personal blog, 19 Oct 2014] <<http://oldyosef.hkdavc.com/2014/10/19/我為這一句鼓勵的話來了羅馬也很值得/>> [Accessed 12 Sep 2016].

¹⁵¹ Waltz, *Theory*, p. 131.

power by estimating 'how they score on all the following items: size of population and territory, resource endowment, economic capability, military strength, political stability and competence.'¹⁵² In making this argument, Waltz insisted that all these aspects of state power should be measured together. He was against the view that a state could be counted as powerful if it only scored highly on some of these criteria.¹⁵³

However, if we apply Waltz's argument to Sino-Vatican relations, it is quite clear that the Vatican's power becomes negligible compared to that of the PRC. In fact, the situation is somewhat like an ant's dance with an elephant. As discussed in previous sections, the Vatican does not possess a population, territory, resources, or economy in the traditional sense, let alone armed forces. Even if we use an analogy by considering worldwide Catholics as the Vatican's citizens, Rome will still score very low according to Waltz's criteria because it lacks the means to have material control over Catholics: in modern times the church usually cannot collect taxes from believers; the Vatican does not have any police system to enforce Canon Law; even for the most serious offenders of the church laws, Rome cannot take any coercive action against them apart from excommunication. In international politics, a modern Pope can no longer use armed forces to defend the church's interest – hence the famous quote from Joseph Stalin: 'The Pope? How many divisions does he have?'

Therefore, if we measure the power of Rome and Beijing using Waltz's criteria, then Rome appears extremely weak and does not have any leverage in dealing with Beijing. But is that really the case? In fact, the Vatican is far from powerless in its dealings with Beijing. Under Rome's uncompromising guidelines in the 1950s, Catholics in China boycotted for a long period and caused much trouble to Beijing's religious policy.

¹⁵² Ibid.

¹⁵³ Ibid., p.130.

Throughout the 1950s, Rome's power and influence over Chinese Catholics vexed Beijing so much and compelled Beijing to adjust its Catholic policies many times. Only in 1958 did Beijing work out a mechanism to deal with the Catholic Church in China – after almost a decade's struggle with the Vatican. However, the mechanism devised by Beijing did not solve the 'Vatican problem' in the Chinese Catholic Church and the Holy See continues to exert its power over Catholics in China to this day. Taking these facts into consideration, should we still regard the Vatican as powerless in its relationships with Beijing?

Interestingly, if we view this issue at a higher level and see the Vatican's position in the international order, we would find that Waltz's criteria are equally untenable. Despite being without material capability, the Vatican is a powerful agent on the international stage and its influence rivals big states – in 2016, when Chinese President Xi Jinping was visiting the US, Pope Francis was also carrying out his papal visit there. (The two, however, did not meet each other during their respective visits). *The Economist* remarked that Chinese officials were 'shocked and flabbergasted' by the different responses to the two leaders' visits to the US because the Pope got more applause and media coverage than President Xi.¹⁵⁴ In other words, the microstate Vatican sometimes outshines states as powerful as China in international politics. How could this be the case if Waltz's criteria are infallible?

In fact, Waltz, as the founder of neo-realism in the study of IR, was critiqued by later theorists for his materialist tendency. Due to his reliance on theories of economics and his objection to 'reductionist theories', Waltz did not take

¹⁵⁴ 'Catholics: Party and Pontiff', *The Economist*, 9 Apr 2016
<<http://www.economist.com/news/china/21696511-two-articles-examine-chinas-often-troubled-relationship-christianity-first-looks-signs>> [accessed on 12 Sep 2016].

the influence of ideas into consideration. However, neo-realism is not the only strain of realist thought. If we have a glance at the earlier supporters of realism, we would find that classical realism did take ideas into account. E. H. Carr regards 'power over opinion' as an essential part of state power.¹⁵⁵ In arguing this, Carr thinks that ideas are no less important than economics and the military when evaluating state power. For Carr, the way of realising this 'power over opinion' is propaganda – it can be carried out either domestically, or against another state as 'an instrument of policy'.¹⁵⁶ When discussing 'power over opinion', the first example given by Carr is the Catholic Church: 'it was the Catholic Church which first understood and developed the potentialities of power over large masses of opinion.'¹⁵⁷ Carr then argues that the mediaeval church was 'the first propaganda organization' and 'the first totalitarian state'. These comments show that Carr paid full attention to Rome's influence over ideas and regarded it as a good case of 'power over opinion' – Rome is no longer powerless if we take ideas into consideration.

However, it should be noted that Carr has some reservations regarding the concept of 'power over opinion'. To be more specific, Carr insists that 'power over opinion cannot be dissociated from other forms of power.'¹⁵⁸ In other words, Carr maintains that this power cannot work on its own and has to be supported by the economic and military clout of a state. This reservation again seems to be causing difficulties in my efforts to apply realism to Sino-Vatican relations – Can Rome still be considered powerful if it does not have the economic/military means to support its 'power over opinion'? In fact, such a problem is not hard to solve. First, we should consider the historical

¹⁵⁵ Carr, *Twenty Years' Crisis*, p. 120.

¹⁵⁶ Ibid., p. 122.

¹⁵⁷ Ibid.

¹⁵⁸ Ibid., p. 129.

circumstances of E. H. Carr's times. His major intellectual opponent was 'utopianism', which was overly focused on the power of morality. Carr needed to distance himself from utopianism in his writing, so he was quite cautious when discussing 'power over opinion' and argued that it has to be supported by a material basis. Second, even if we follow Carr's logic, the Vatican (especially in the 1950s) could still be considered powerful if we take the Holy See's *de facto* alliance with the West against the communist bloc during the Cold War. Indeed, the Holy See's close relationships with the US had made the church presence in China very suspect in Beijing's eyes during the Korean War. In other words, the West's economic and military might, combined with Rome's spiritual influence, had exerted real pressure on Beijing. Hence, according to Carr's theory, the Vatican can be considered a powerful opponent of Beijing in their contest over the hearts and minds of Catholics in China.

However, I would like to take the realist analysis further and argue that the lack of material power is actually Rome's advantage in its struggle with Beijing over ideas. The reason is simple: Beijing cannot use conventional coercive measures (economic sanctions/military deterrence) against Rome. These measures could be highly effective against typical states, but not Rome. With this advantage, Rome gets an upper hand in its ant's dance with Beijing as the elephant – an elephant could crush everything on the ground with its mighty trunk and feet, but an ant is the creature most likely to survive the elephant's might. It can remain unscathed either by hiding under a pebble, or simply climbing onto the elephant's body. With the same logic, the Vatican is immune to Beijing's material sanctions while keeping its continuing influence over Chinese Catholics.

To be more specific, from a realist perspective, the Sino-Vatican dispute is a war of ideas and each side wants to maximize their influence on Chinese Catholics' opinions. In this contest, Beijing cannot subject Rome to its will by economic and military coercion. In fact, when dealing with typical states,

Beijing can often use conventional means to reach its political aims. For example, on the issue of Taiwan, Beijing can use its huge economic and military might to deter Taiwan from declaring independence and sanction the states that wish to build formal diplomatic ties with Taiwan. Indeed, Beijing's conventional deterrence against Taiwan is quite effective – to the extent that no major states in the world recognise Taiwan's sovereignty and the United Nations has been shunning Taipei since 1971. However, Beijing's conventional deterrence does not work well on the Vatican and Rome still maintains diplomatic ties with Taipei to this day. Due to its lack of economic and military strength, the Vatican has almost nothing to lose in the face of Beijing's sanctions. Hence, the seeming weakness of Rome actually becomes its edge in Sino-Vatican relations – the Vatican is unaffected by Beijing's material sanctions and can always exert its influence over Chinese Catholics.

Therefore, in this war of ideas, Rome has the upper hand. Facing Rome's strength in 'power over opinion', Beijing does not have effective options to curb Rome's influence over Chinese Catholics. Indeed, for a secular government, the most direct way of dealing with threats from a religious organisation is to attack its personnel. In the 1950s Beijing took many harsh measures against the Vatican's presence in China. The papal internuncio was humiliated and expelled from mainland China, together with virtually all the foreign missionaries. Local churchmen loyal to the Vatican were arrested and imprisoned for a long time (e.g. Bishop Kung). However, these harsh measures were largely unsuccessful in containing Rome's influence. Worse, it antagonised many Chinese Catholics and made them ever more pro-Vatican. Beijing certainly realised this and its approach towards priests has become more benign since the 1980s. Apart from expulsion and arrests, another option for a secular government is to cut off the local church's contact with Rome and therefore isolate it from foreign influence – for example, little is known about the Catholic Church in today's North

Korea. However, Beijing is certainly different from Pyongyang in terms of openness. Moreover, China is a huge country and it is impossible to seal the border completely. (In fact, in latter parts of this thesis we will see that the Chinese border is quite porous when facing the Vatican's influence.) To put it briefly, denying contact between the local church and the Vatican is not a viable option for China. Even if this policy works to its full potential, it could only shelve the problem instead of solving it – despite the loss of contact between Rome and the church in China during the Cultural Revolution, Rome quickly became influential again for Chinese Catholics when China again opened to the world.

A third option for a secular state against the church is to confiscate its institutions, properties and other assets, therefore depriving the church of her material basis. We can find many such attempts made by secular governments in European history (e.g. during the Reformation). Similarly, in the early 1950s, Beijing did confiscate many church properties and nationalised Catholic universities and other educational institutions in China. These measures caused financial difficulties to the church in China but did not make the Vatican less influential among Chinese Catholics. In later times, Beijing also used a reverse method to deal with the church, namely to give the church financial aid and help the church in China build institutions, including church buildings and seminaries. Since the 1980s, Beijing has given many formerly seized church properties back to the church and has handed out stipends to priests. The purpose was to encourage the priests to affiliate with the government and become more 'patriotic'. However, the government's material help could not replace the Vatican's power over ideas. Despite the government's efforts, the Vatican's influence is still there in the Chinese Catholic Church. Hence, it is clear that Beijing's material means could not wipe out the Vatican's influence over the church in China.

Under the realist mind-set, the nature of Sino-Vatican relations is a power struggle and a zero-sum game. Beijing would try its best to suppress the church's influence in China while Rome would encourage Catholics to boycott and sabotage Beijing's rule. In fact, such a viewpoint complies with the situation described by Myers' book title – Catholics in China are the 'enemies without guns' of the PRC government; and to eradicate Catholicism was in Beijing's interest. However, is that really the nature of Sino-Vatican relations? Is power politics the only reality between Beijing and Rome? Is war the only viable option for each state?

Liberalism and Sino-Vatican relations: The End of History?

In this section I will try to bring liberalism into this study and discuss its relevance to Sino-Vatican relations. As one of the mainstream schools of IR, liberalism has better confidence in the good side of human nature and maintains that genuine cooperation between states, even under an international anarchy, is possible. Liberal thinkers put much more focus on the rule of law, democracy and human rights in international relations. Moreover, liberals advocate free trade and inter-dependence between nations and regard it as a good way towards world peace.

In the post-Cold War world, the greater role played by the UN, the expansion of liberal democracy in the world and the deepening of regional cooperation (e.g. the European Union) made liberal scholars more confident in their debates with realists. Though also acknowledging international anarchy and regarding states as guided by interests, liberals believe that states can work together for a better future and every individual can participate in this process by advocating and following liberal values.

So how does liberalism connect with Sino-Vatican relations? The first insight we could get from this school of thought is that conflict and power struggles are not the full picture in Sino-Vatican relations. Dialogues and

communication could happen between Beijing and Rome and they can work towards a rapprochement. Indeed, after 1980, the ice between the two sides had thawed and many positive signs appeared in their communications. Both sides have been expressing 'sincere wishes' to improve mutual relationships and 'let bygones be bygones'. Moreover, compared to the situation in the 1950s, the intensity of conflict between Beijing and Rome has been greatly reduced and they no longer take harsh measures against each other. All these signs seem to comply with a liberal vision – despite international anarchy, Beijing and Rome can still engage in meaningful dialogues and seek common interests. Beijing might realise that a thriving church in China and its communion with Rome is not a threat, but an opportunity for Beijing to build a better society and show the world that religious freedom fully exists in China. On the other hand, Rome could realise that a good relationship with Beijing will do a huge service to the church in China and facilitate the church's effort to evangelize the Chinese masses. In sum, the improvement of Beijing-Rome relations is in each other's interest. Hence, both parties should seek reconciliation and abandon the zero-sum mind-set.

Such analysis is based on the innate optimism of liberal thinking. However, how is it possible to realise such an ideal vision between Beijing and Rome? For relations between typical states, possible liberal advice is to engage in free trade and increase inter-dependency – when two sides share enough common interests and one cannot prosper without the other, peace will be realised between the two parties and wars will become unthinkable. However, this advice is not applicable to Sino-Vatican relations due to the lack of economic dimension in it. So the focus should be on the other tenet of liberalism – democracy. For liberals, the prevalence of democracy in the world is crucial for maintaining world peace because true democracies will never fight each other. War still exists in this world only because of the existence of non-democratic states. Either the non-democracies will fight

each other, or they may wage wars against democracies for selfish gains. Hence, by promoting liberal values on the world stage and transforming non-democratic countries into democracies, world peace will be maintained and consolidated.

Such 'Democratic Peace Theory' reflects the confidence of liberals in liberal democracy as the best political system in the history of human beings. This confidence is best illustrated by Francis Fukuyama's book, *The End of History and the Last Man*, in which he boldly asserts that liberal democracy is the best system of government in human history and it will ultimately triumph over other non-liberal political systems. Indeed, both Democratic Peace Theory and the notion of 'the End of History' concentrated their focus on the political systems of individual countries, hence it could be argued that for liberals spreading democratic values to non-democracies is more important than power politics and balancing in their pursuit of maintaining world peace.

For liberals in the West, China is one of the world's biggest non-democratic regimes and certainly an important target to convert. Fukuyama was optimistic about the possibility of regime change in communist countries, including China. He argues: 'the desire for recognition has also played a critical role in bringing about the anti-communist earthquake in the Soviet Union, Eastern Europe, and China.'¹⁵⁹ For Fukuyama, 'the desire for recognition' is an innate human need for dignity and prestige. This basic human need motivates people to pursue democracy and gives them the courage to sacrifice their lives for it if necessary. Such a desire also cannot be assuaged by mere economic reforms and the rise in living standards.

¹⁵⁹ Francis Fukuyama, *The End of History and the Last Man* (London: Penguin Books, 2012), p. 177.

Therefore, following Fukuyama's logic, China's economic reform in the 1980s, despite raising its citizens' living standard, would not satisfy the people's desire for recognition. The Chinese masses would stand up to the illiberal regime and demand democracy due to their 'lack of a voice'.¹⁶⁰

Therefore, in a liberal analysis of Sino-Vatican relations, based on the above theories, the likely conclusion would be that Beijing's non-liberal political system ('totalitarian' or 'authoritarian' in the mouths of many liberals) is the reason behind the Beijing-Rome disputes. The solution to these disputes lies in a future regime change in China. When Beijing is transformed into a liberal democracy and reaches 'the End of History', it will no longer 'persecute' the church in China and peace will be realised between China and the Vatican. In other words, liberals assume that when China becomes fully democratic (i.e. like the US) the Sino-Vatican dispute and other religious problems in China will be solved once and for all.

So what is the Vatican's position in this liberal campaign against Beijing? In fact, from the perspective of those who believe that China's illiberal political system is the origin of every problem, the Vatican's dispute with Beijing is part of the free world's effort to transform China to a democracy. The suffering of Chinese Catholics in the 1950s was the inevitable consequence of living under a totalitarian regime and the resistance of Chinese clergy and laity is part of the Chinese people's struggle against a repressive state. Following this line, even the Vatican's recent efforts to approach Beijing become less acceptable in the eyes of liberals, because reconciliation with an 'authoritarian' regime cannot be justified from a liberal perspective. Cardinal Zen, the former Bishop of Hong Kong, speaks against a Rome-Beijing rapprochement under the current conditions and argues that to talk

¹⁶⁰ Ibid., p. 179.

with a communist government is like the situation where John the Baptist negotiates with Herod.¹⁶¹ Similarly, Taipei also tries to persuade Rome to keep Rome-Taipei diplomatic ties because Beijing does not obey liberal values while Taipei is a fully-fledged liberal democracy. Taipei's ambassadors to Rome often stress that Taipei and Rome share many values and goals – democracy is certainly one of them. For example, in 1997, Raymond Tai, Taiwan's Ambassador to the Holy See, stated that Taiwan and Rome have a 'common desire', which is to 'join hands in making Mainland China free'.¹⁶²

In sum, from such a stance, the Vatican's dispute with Beijing is part of the liberal campaign against authoritarian regimes worldwide. In order to convert China to a full democracy, the Vatican should support Chinese Catholics' struggle against a repressive Beijing. Rome should not seek any reconciliation with the Chinese regime until it embraces liberal democratic values. Interestingly, here the prescription of liberalism becomes not very different from that offered by realism. Both would suggest that Rome should not seek a rapprochement with Beijing: either Rome's interests will be compromised by Beijing, or Rome risks becoming an accomplice of an authoritarian regime and doing a disservice to China's democratization.

In the above section I have proposed a possible liberal prescription for the Vatican in dealing with Beijing. According to this vision, Rome's contest with Beijing should be understood in the context of a world struggle between liberal democracies and authoritarian regimes. Rome should support the

¹⁶¹ Ze-Kiun Zen, 'Regarding a "painful call" (as a reply to Gianni Valente)' [Cardinal Zen's personal blog, 29 Jul 2016] < [¹⁶² Raymond Tai, 'If Only China were Free!', *The Washington Times*, 2 Nov 1997, cited in *A Collection of Documents on the History of the 60 Years of Sino-Vatican Diplomatic Relations*, ed. by Fangzhong Chen and Junde Wu \(Taipei: The Fu Jen Catholic Historical Institute, 2002\), pp.522-528 \(Chinese side\).](http://oldyosef.hkdavc.com/2016/07/29/從一個「沉痛的呼籲」講起（回應 gianni-valente） /> [accessed 19 Sep 2016].</p></div><div data-bbox=)

Chinese masses in their effort to realise democracy's 'manifest destiny' in China. However, does this notion fit under the actual circumstances? Let us start from the side of Rome. The first point I would like to put forward here is that historically Rome could hardly be considered an ally of liberalism. In pre-modern times, Rome had a long record of anti-liberal practice, including persecution of heretics and suppression of free speech. Only in the 1960s (after the Vatican II) did Rome openly embrace some liberal values and become an advocate of religious tolerance.

Secondly, the Vatican's political system is far from the liberal ideal. Far from being a liberal democracy, Rome is Europe's only absolute monarchy and the Pope is never elected by universal elections. The ruling style of Rome is highly centralised and separation of powers is non-existent. Despite many calls for reform, the way Rome runs the church is by no means similar to the liberal ideal and the decision making process (including that of state finances) is far from transparent. Thirdly, today's Rome does not agree with all the liberal creeds. For example, the Vatican differs from typical liberals in its attitude towards issues like abortion, contraception and gay marriage. Hence, it is clear that Rome is not a full advocate of liberalism, both historically and contemporarily.

In fact, Rome shares many traits with Beijing in terms of the system of government: both have a centralised political system and complex hierarchical bureaucracy; both have a strong government that exerts control over local units; both states' leaders are chosen by a small group of the elite. Therefore, it could be argued that in terms of a political system Rome is more similar to Beijing than to the liberal democratic states in the West – the notion that Rome is a natural ally of liberalism becomes untenable. In fact, from modern historical experience we can see that it is possible for Rome to maintain stable (if not cordial) relations with non-liberal or even despotic governments, to name but a few: The Chilean regime during Pinochet's rule; Francoist Spain; the Estado Novo regime in Portugal and

Ngô Đình Diệm's regime in South Vietnam. Hence, the non-liberal nature of the PRC should not be regarded as the origin of every problem in Sino-Vatican relations.

Now let us proceed to discuss the side of Beijing and see whether the liberal notion works in China. Firstly, it is quite clear that the Chinese leadership does not agree with the superiority of Western-style democracy. Such an attitude could be summarised by a famous quote from Mr. Xi Jinping in 2009: 'It seems that some senseless foreigners really like to make indiscreet remarks about our own affairs. However, firstly China won't export revolutions, secondly China won't export hunger and poverty; thirdly we never interfere with others. So how can they still say such groundless things?'¹⁶³ Indeed, the Chinese leadership has long expressed their apathy towards Western-style democracy while regarding the West's efforts to promote democracy in China as attempts to topple the PRC government. The West's sponsorship of Chinese dissidents is bitterly criticised by Beijing as aiming to destabilise Beijing's rule and to smear Beijing's reputation. Hence, the leadership is sceptical of the West's liberal campaign and does not show Fukuyama's concept of 'desire for recognition'.

But how about ordinary people? Are they more enthusiastic about the democratization of China? I would argue for a 'no' to this question. Since 1989, there have never been any nation-wide mass demonstrations with the aim of causing a regime change in China. The younger generation and university students are generally not interested in promoting Western-style democracy in China. For example, in 2011, some Chinese dissidents, inspired by the ongoing Arab Spring, issued an anonymous online call for a

¹⁶³ Shang Qing, 'What are the reasons behind Xi Jinping's assertive speech?', *BBC News Chinese Version*, 17 Feb 2009,

<http://news.bbc.co.uk/chinese/simp/hi/newsid_7890000/newsid_7895200/7895245.stm> [accessed on 12 Sep 2016].

‘Chinese jasmine revolution’ and suggested some dates and places for mass demonstrations in major Chinese cities. This call greatly alerted Beijing and the security measures in major Chinese cities were tightened. However, the actual response to the revolutionary call was so cold that on the appointed day, the suggested meeting places of demonstrators were filled almost entirely with policemen and foreign journalists.

Apart from the coldness shown towards liberal democracy, the Chinese grassroots are actually highly nationalist and would easily be offended by the West’s liberal pressure on China. In 2008, before the Summer Olympics in Beijing, the Chinese publicity campaign for the event in France met with many protests and boycotts from pro-democratic and pro-Tibetan-independence activists. When reports of such protests appeared in the Chinese media, an outcry occurred on the Chinese Internet and many Chinese cities saw anti-French demonstrations. In sum, in contemporary China, both the Chinese leadership and the grassroots show little interest in liberal democracy and the West’s promotion of liberal values is widely regarded as a conspiracy to de-stabilize China – this is quite different from Fukuyama’s prediction for China, where the grassroots would fight the government in their ‘desire for recognition’.

To conclude, liberal thinking tends to attribute the reason for the Sino-Vatican dispute to the fact that the Chinese regime is not a liberal democracy. With this mind-set, the solution is the democratisation of China and the Holy See should contribute to this process. However, this thesis argues that such a liberal picture could be both misleading and unrealistic. Firstly, it is misleading because Rome itself is not a natural ally of liberalism. Secondly, it is unrealistic because Beijing does not fit into the ‘End of History’ notion. Neither the leadership nor the grassroots in China show a strong tendency for the ‘desire for recognition’. In fact, two decades after publishing *The End of History*, even Fukuyama himself has somehow revised his viewpoints in his recent works. The confidence of liberalism is

waning today. If we consider the ‘Arab Winter’, the brutal civil war in Syria and the resulting waves of migrants travelling to Europe, together with the rise of far-right political parties and politicians, it is quite clear that liberal values are in deep crisis. By contrast, Beijing, the regime who is sceptical of liberal values, still maintains its trend of growth and becomes more assertive in face of the West. Hence, in this situation, does the liberal notion regarding China still hold true? Is it really wise for Rome to join the liberals in their campaign against Beijing, or should Rome wait for a future regime change in Beijing?

Constructivism and Sino-Vatican relations

In the above sections I have applied two schools of IR thought, namely realism and liberalism, to Sino-Vatican relations and examined their respective explanatory power. Using their key concepts, I attempted to draw two different pictures of the Beijing-Rome relationship and discussed their implications. My argument is that while the two schools offer us insights into some aspects of Sino-Vatican relations, neither of them has adequate explanatory power for the Beijing-Rome relationship. Despite their different views, both may lead to a conclusion that Rome should maintain a confrontational stance against Beijing, either for self-interest or liberal ethics. I argue that both viewpoints miss many aspects of the Beijing-Rome relationship. Furthermore, it is not helpful in conflict resolution because if the policymakers of both Beijing and Rome all follow their own prescriptions, the stalemate between the two sides would not be solved in the foreseeable future. Considering the shortcomings of traditional realism and liberalism, we need another perspective to give more insights into the relationship between Beijing and Rome. To be more specific, we need a theory that takes both changes and reasons behind those changes into account – that is constructivism, the third major perspective in the field of IR.

In fact, constructivism does not belong exclusively to IR. It is a general philosophical viewpoint that human knowledge does not necessarily reflect objective truth, but is constructed by social interactions. Constructivism's modern origins can be traced to Jean Piaget's psychological theories in the 1960s and its offshoot in sociology is called social constructionism. Despite its relatively long history in the humanities, constructivism only became influential in IR in the 1990s, thanks to Alexander Wendt's efforts to combine social constructivism with IR theories.¹⁶⁴ Hence, constructivism in IR can be considered as a school that interprets international relations from a social constructivist perspective.

So what is the main difference between constructivism and the other two major IR schools? In fact, the difference originates from their different assumptions about human knowledge. A very succinct summary of the basic premises of social constructivism comes from Burr:¹⁶⁵

- a) A critical approach to taken-for-granted knowledge: our knowledge of the world should not be treated as objective truth.
- b) Historical and cultural specificity: we are fundamentally historical and cultural beings and our views of, and our knowledge about, the world are the 'products of historically situated interchanges among people'.
- c) The link between knowledge and social processes: our ways of understanding the world are created and maintained by social processes.

¹⁶⁴ See: Wendt, *Social Theory*, and Wendt, 'Anarchy is What States Made of It'.

¹⁶⁵ Vivien Burr, cited in Marianne Jorgensen and Louise Philips, *Discourse Analysis as Theory and Method* (London: SAGE Publications, 2002), p.5.

Hence, when applying these principles to the study of IR, it is clear that constructivism will offer viewpoints strikingly different from those given by realism and liberalism. Considering the importance of constructivism to this thesis, in the following part I will provide a brief review of Alexander Wendt's constructivist theory, by far the most influential one in the constructivist camp. My following account of Wendt's thought mainly comes from his treatise *Social Theory of International Politics*, which is the most comprehensive elaboration of his constructivist theory.¹⁶⁶

Wendt's book is long and rich in content. However, following Burr's logic, I have summarised Wendt's critique of traditional IR approaches as follows:

- a) The key assumptions of realism and liberalism (i.e. the material nature of international systems) were actually taken-for-granted knowledge that should be critiqued.¹⁶⁷
- b) The anarchical nature of international politics described by realism and liberalism are culturally specific and are not universal truth. Indeed, there are different kinds of anarchy and each will lead to a different world picture.¹⁶⁸
- c) The ways states understand self and others are created and maintained by social interactions.¹⁶⁹

Following this framework, In the following part I will briefly explain Wendt's critique of traditional IR schools, namely realism and liberalism.

¹⁶⁶ Wendt, *Social Theory*.

¹⁶⁷ Ibid., pp.92-139.

¹⁶⁸ Ibid., pp. 246-312.

¹⁶⁹ Ibid., pp. 343-369.

The first aspect of Wendt's critique of traditional IR schools is focused on the materialist tendency of neo-realism and neo-liberalism. According to Wendt, in the eyes of neo-realists, the international system is 'a distribution of material capabilities'; while for the neoliberals it is 'capabilities plus institutions'.¹⁷⁰ In other words, both schools view material as the basis for and determinant of international relations. In Wendt's time, the dominant school of IR was neo-realism and neo-liberalism. However, Wendt's critique of traditional IR schools is mainly directed against neo-realism because he thinks neo-liberals share the same materialistic belief with neo-realists and are therefore equally 'caught in a Realist trap'.¹⁷¹ In other words, his critique of neo-realism would be also valid towards neo-liberalism.

The neo-realist thought is best represented by Kenneth Waltz's work *Theory of International Politics*. So it is not strange that it should become the major target of Wendt's criticism. In this work, Waltz argued that the structure of the international system is determined by the distribution of material capabilities – the more economic/military capabilities a state has, the more powerful it is in the international system. Waltz insisted that material capabilities are the only reliable determinants of behaviour in the international system and refused to take in beliefs, intentions and ideologies as variables. Regarding this materialist view, Wendt expresses his strong disagreement and argues that the international system can only be understood when taking ideas into consideration.

To be more specific, Wendt attacks Waltz's neo-realist theory by pointing out that it does not actually have any explanatory power without some hidden constructivist assumptions. In other words, neo-realist theories were

¹⁷⁰ Wendt, 'Anarchy is What States Make of It', p. 5.

¹⁷¹ Wendt, *Social Theory*, p.136.

‘cheating’ by ‘building implicit cultural elements into their claims’.¹⁷² To illustrate this, Wendt first highlights the two assumptions of Waltz’s theory: (1) security is the most important concern of states; (2) states are selfish and only care about their own interests.¹⁷³ Then Wendt points out that both assumptions rely on ideas – if security is the essential concern of states, what is security and how can it be realised? (The answer given by a ‘revisionist’ state and ‘status quo’ state will be radically different).¹⁷⁴ If states care only about their own interests, how is it possible to explain the mutual trust between the US and Canada, and that between Britain and France in today’s international politics?¹⁷⁵ Using these arguments Wendt reveals that Waltz’s concept of material capabilities ‘rests on implicit assumptions about the distribution of interests’, which is, in turn, made up of ideas.¹⁷⁶

The second aspect of Wendt’s critique of traditional IR thought draws the reader’s attention to the important role of culture in international politics. After showing that ideas are the real basis of the international system, Wendt proceeds to examine another key concept in realist and liberal literature, namely anarchy. While admitting that anarchy exists in international politics, Wendt does not agree with previous IR scholars about its implications. As I have discussed earlier in this chapter, anarchy in international relations is one of the fundamental claims of traditional IR schools (especially realism). Realists argue that because of anarchy, states can only rely on themselves to protect their interests and their policies have

¹⁷² Ibid., p.136.

¹⁷³ Ibid., p.100.

¹⁷⁴ Ibid., p.104.

¹⁷⁵ Ibid., p.106.

¹⁷⁶ Ibid., p.96.

to be self-serving. However, Wendt questioned this logic and regarded it as taken-for-granted knowledge.

While agreeing that anarchy does exist in state-to-state relations, Wendt argued that anarchy does not necessarily warrant self-help and selfish state policies. In fact, as Wendt put it, 'Self-help is an institution, one of various structures of identity and interest that may exist under anarchy.'¹⁷⁷ In other words, self-help and selfish policies are only one of the possible reactions of states to international anarchy. States can also regard each other as friends and build mutual trust. Wendt argued that the concept of anarchy and power politics does not have much explanatory power over many international issues.

Wendt's critique of the traditional view of anarchy is based on his argument that there are different cultures of anarchy and each of them leads to different consequences. Wendt posits that there are three cultures of anarchy, namely Hobbesian, Lockean and Kantian. The first type of culture, Hobbesian, depicts a savage international environment where every state regards the others as enemies. The second type of culture, Lockean, is far more benign than the Hobbesian one because the 'kill or be killed' savage logic is no more.¹⁷⁸ States in this system have learnt to respect each other's sovereignty and no longer try to annihilate others. The third type of anarchical culture is Kantian. In this culture, states trust each other and regard one another as friends. War is no longer regarded as an option to settle disputes and states will come to each other's mutual aid whenever there is a threat.

Wendt points out that the key aspect of social learning is interaction. When states interact with each other, they will acquire or confirm identities and

¹⁷⁷ Wendt, 'Anarchy', p.399.

¹⁷⁸ Ibid., p.279.

interests. Wendt illustrates the process of how states build their identities during interaction with his “Ego and Alter model”. He divides an interaction into four “scenes” as shown below:

Scene 1: Based on its *a priori* definition, Ego sends a signal to Alter to “teach” its definition of the situation to Alter.

Scene 2: Alter interprets the meaning of Ego’s action. Such interpretation is guided by its own, *a priori* definition.

Scene 3: Based on his new definition of the situation, Alter engages in an action of his own.

Scene 4: Ego interprets Alter’s action and prepares his response.

In this way, the two actors learn and reinforce their identities in response to how they are treated by one another. The essence of the above process is a mutual exchange of signals. In addition, the sending and interpreting of these signals are all based on “*a priori* definitions”. Wendt points out that this process is a ‘self-fulfilling prophecy’:

‘By treating the Other as if he is supposed to respond a certain way Alter and Ego will eventually learn shared ideas that generate those responses, and then by taking those ideas as their starting point they will tend to reproduce them in subsequent interactions. Identities and interests are not only learned in interaction, in other words, but sustained by it.’¹⁷⁹

To conclude, Wendt offered a powerful critique of traditional IR thought’s materialist tendency and oversimplified view of anarchy. He used the ‘three cultures’ model to incorporate the views of realism and liberalism into a single constructivist model and highlighted the potential of and possible

¹⁷⁹ Ibid., p.331.

methods towards a better future. So how does his theory connect with the relationship between Beijing and Rome?

In fact, Wendt's theory offers us an alternative way to understand Sino-Vatican relations. With this perspective we can see many things in the Beijing-Rome relationship that could not be offered by realism and liberalism. The reason behind this is that both schools tend to hold an essentialist view of states. By the term 'essentialist' I mean that both Beijing and Rome are regarded as actors with a series of fixed, stable attributes. For example, in the realist image, both states have certain fixed national interests and will automatically take hostile actions against each other to defend these interests. On the other hand, in the liberal picture there is a hidden assumption that adhering to liberal values is states' moral responsibility. Hence, Beijing is not moral because it does not subscribe to liberal values while Rome was attributed a moral responsibility not to compromise in the face of Beijing. In sum, despite the differences between realism and liberalism, they actually offer very similar advice to policymakers and certainly miss many nuances in the Beijing-Rome relationship. In the light of this, we need to introduce a third IR perspective into our study – that is constructivism.

Constructivism is built on its critique of the traditional two schools of IR, namely realism and liberalism. It differs from the two schools with its anti-essentialist tendency – it rejects the determinism hidden in realist/liberal thinking and regards the interests and values in international relations as being in fact constructed ideas. Hence, from a constructivist perspective, Rome and Beijing will no longer be considered as actors with pre-ordained, fixed identities and interests (e.g. authoritarian regime, subversive and threatening external power). Instead, the concept of identity is regarded as the result of interaction. In other words, Beijing and Rome's respective identities and interests, if there are any, are the result of their deeds and gestures towards each other. Since these identities are not fixed, there is

always a possibility that the two parties will change their mutual identities and become friends of each other. The dispute in Sino-Vatican relations will be regarded as the result of a constructivist process instead of pre-given interests/moral values and principles.

A Preliminary Analysis Using Wendt's Constructivism

If we use Wendt's framework of constructivism to examine Sino-Vatican relations, what will happen? I will do a preliminary analysis here. The first point constructivism offers us is that the interests and values in Sino-Vatican relations are actually made of ideas, which change over time. For example, it could be argued that Rome's interest lies in the survival and the loyalty of the church in China. But what exactly this interest is made of and how it can be realised depends on how one perceives it. In other words, interest becomes nothing when it is devoid of ideas.

So, in the case of China, the Vatican's decision-makers need to ponder over different options if they want to realise their interests. For example, should they encourage the church in China to boycott the government, or instead keep a low-profile to ensure the survival of the church? Different decisions reflect different perceptions and will exert different impacts on Sino-Vatican relations. Similarly, Beijing's interests are also made of ideas and can only be realised by different decisions. For the Beijing leadership, they need to decide on a series of questions when carrying out religious policy. For example, they need to decide: to what extent does the church pose a threat to the regime; which is the most effective way to deal with the church; whether or not the church should be tolerated. To sum up, although the leadership of Beijing has 'state security' as its interest, the perception of such interest and the way to implement it all depends on ideas. Therefore, from a constructivist viewpoint, when discussing interests in Sino-Vatican relations, we should know that they are made of ideas themselves and are therefore not unchangeable.

The second point to be noticed when applying constructivism to Sino-Vatican relations is that the identities of both countries also change in the course of history. In fact, since Catholicism entered China four centuries ago, Rome and the Chinese regime have taken many different stances towards each other. For example, due to the early missionary efforts made by the Jesuits in China, Catholicism won the good feelings of the Chinese rulers. The church during this period showed respect for Chinese culture and portrayed herself as a co-defender of Confucian ethics. In return, the Chinese emperors were happy to play the role of Catholicism's protector. However, such ways of identifying underwent a dramatic change after the 'Chinese Rites Controversy' in the 1700s, where Rome banned Chinese Catholics from venerating their ancestors and paying tribute to Confucius. After such a ban, the church suddenly became a cult and heresy to the Chinese regime and the Chinese emperors and other elites turned into the church's persecutors. After 1842, when the Chinese Empire was forced to open up to European powers, the church re-entered China 'under the protection of foreign gunboats' and hence became an accomplice of colonialism in the eyes of Chinese rulers. However, later on in history, in the early 1900s, the Chinese ruling elites realised Rome's diplomatic value to China and made many efforts to build formal diplomatic ties with Rome. Now, Rome's identity again changed in the eyes of Chinese rulers and became a friend in fighting colonialism. When it came to the 1940s, Rome again showed a kind face to the KMT Government of China, who also considered Rome as a valuable friend. In sum, from historical experience, we can see that the mutual identities of Rome and the Chinese regimes changed many times. This is in accordance with the constructivist view of identity and shows a picture far more complex than the ones provided by realist/liberal analysis.

The third point to be noticed in carrying out a constructivist analysis on Sino-Vatican relations is that interaction really matters and exerts a huge

influence over the outcomes. As we will see in the latter chapters of this thesis, Beijing and Rome were not each other's enemies at the very beginning of their interactions in 1949. Indeed, the two sides managed to co-exist peacefully for a year. Secondly, regarding the Beijing-Rome dispute, there was a long escalation process in the 1950s and an equally long de-escalation process later on in their history of interactions. The existence of such long periods of escalation and de-escalation means that the outcome of Sino-Vatican relations is determined by interaction instead of by pre-given interests and identities. In sum, in Sino-Vatican relations both Beijing and Rome were closely watching each other and their actions were made according to what the other side did. For example, looking from the Chinese side, Beijing would be 'ego' and Rome would be 'alter'. If 'alter' treats Beijing as an enemy, then hostile actions would be carried out by Rome against Beijing. This would provoke Beijing's ('ego')'s punitive measures against Rome ('alter'). These punitive measures will further strengthen Rome's perception that 'Beijing is an enemy' and cause more hostile deeds from Rome. Hence a vicious circle would be formed and Sino-Vatican relations would reach a stalemate. This mutual feedback process in interaction is crucial to a deeper understanding of Sino-Vatican relations.

Last but not least, in conducting a constructivist analysis of Sino-Vatican relations, one should not assume that changes, especially positive changes, could happen easily in the interactions between Beijing and Rome. In fact, the two states, when dealing with each other, were under the heavy influence of their dramatically different cultures and views of the world. Their initial perceptions towards each other are equally crucial in their policymaking. On the side of the Vatican, Pope Pius XII had been staunchly anti-communist and Rome had had a history of confrontation with the Soviet Union and other communist states. Similarly, for Beijing's part, the PRC government at the time had long noticed the cordial relationship between the Vatican and the KMT regime – the archenemy of the Communist Party

of China (CPC). In the context of the Cold War, it was easy for policymakers of both sides to divide the world into two opposing camps: for the Vatican, that was the Catholic faithful versus the atheist regimes; for Beijing, the progressive power of 'the People' versus the reactionary forces of imperialism. All these different worldviews exerted great impact on the subsequent interactions and should not be ignored by researchers taking a constructivist approach. Indeed, Wendt's constructivism had also taken this factor into account. In his theory, all these preconceptions are part of the '*a priori* definitions' and there is no '*tabula rasa*' status in modern state-to-state relations. In later parts of this thesis, I also intend to show the persistence of '*a priori* definitions' in Sino-Vatican relations.

In sum, a 'Wendtian' analysis will show at least three things in Sino-Vatican relations. First, in their interactive history, Rome and Beijing had 'taken' many roles with respect to each other and went through many mutual identifying processes. Second, these identity changes could be quite dramatic, and it is possible for Rome to suddenly become the 'enemy' of Beijing (due to the Chinese Rites Controversy). Third, these identity changes are sustained by interactions, which means how the two sides behave towards each other will impact their future mutual identities. A Wendtian conclusion will be that the stalemate between Beijing and Rome was not pre-determined, but something 'they made of it'. By studying the identity-casting manner between Beijing and Rome in the first decade of their interaction, it is possible to find out the interactional root of their long-standing stalemate and this therefore gives us useful advice about a possible future rapprochement.

Conclusion: A Constructivist Approach is More Suitable

In the above section I have used concepts from three mainstream IR theories to examine Sino-Vatican relations and found that constructivism has the most explanatory power in connection with Sino-Vatican relations.

Differing from realism and liberalism, constructivism holds that ideas are central to IR and states' identities can be changed by interaction. With this view, we can understand better the constructivist nature of Sino-Vatican relations and avoid the oversimplified notions of 'incompatible interests' and 'democracy versus an authoritarian regime'. I have also provided a preliminary analysis using Wendt's analytical model in *Social Theory*. However, it should be noticed that this relatively simplified style of analysis, especially the usage of the term 'identity', is itself not unproblematic.

In the next section I will further discuss why this kind of analysis raises problems and how to solve these problems. During the discussion I will review Wendt's concepts of identity, use critiques from other scholars and clarify my own attitude towards this issue. A tailored definition of 'identity' in this thesis will also be given.

3.3 The Concept of Identity and Discourse

The Question Relating to the Term 'Identity'

The aim of this research is to shed light on the identity articulation process in Sino-Vatican relations. Therefore, it is clear that the concept of identity is important to this thesis. Before applying the word 'identity' to Sino-Vatican relations, it is better to have a general reflection on the term 'identity'. In fact, despite its appearance as a common and straightforward word, the term 'identity' was criticized by some scholars as a vague and overladen term. Hence, before conducting any substantive research, it is essential to justify the use of this term in research and clarify its exact meaning in this thesis. Therefore, in this section I will discuss the concept of identity, namely: what did previous debates say about it? What is my definition of identity? How is it related to, and different from other scholarly definitions and why do I put forward a definition like this?

As my IR theoretical basis is Wendt's constructivism, it is helpful to see how Wendt defines the concept of 'identity'. He briefly defined identity as 'relatively stable, role-specific understandings and expectations about self'¹⁸⁰ in his famous paper *Anarchy is What States Make of It* and made many other defining attempts in *Social Theory of International Politics*, to name but a few:

'To have an identity is simply to have certain ideas about who one is in a given situation, and as such the concept of identity fits squarely into the belief side of the desire plus belief equation. These beliefs in turn help constitute interests.'¹⁸¹

'Identities refer to who or what actors are. They designate social kinds or states of being. Interests refer to what actors want. They designate motivations that help explain behavior... Interests presuppose identities because an actor cannot know what it wants until it knows who it is, and since identities have varying degrees of cultural content so will interests.'¹⁸²

'(Identity is)...a property of intentional actors that generates motivational and behavioral dispositions.'¹⁸³

It can be seen from the above definitions that Wendt's view of identity is quite straightforward – he regards it as the relatively stable basis/belief that generates self-understanding, personality, desire and motivation. In saying 'straightforward' I am arguing that Wendt's definition is quite close to the everyday meaning of this word, namely the dictionary definition of 'identity': 'the fact of being who or what a person or thing is; the characteristics determining who or what a person or thing is'.¹⁸⁴ Hence, in Wendt's works,

¹⁸⁰ Wendt, 'Anarchy', p.397.

¹⁸¹ Wendt, *Social Theory*, p.170.

¹⁸² Ibid., p.231.

¹⁸³ Ibid., p.224.

¹⁸⁴ *Oxford Dictionary of English* [e-version, on the OSX Apple Dictionary 2.2.1].

the word 'identity' refers to the intuitive sense of this term and points to some essential attributes of an actor. In *Social Theory of International Politics*, Wendt also used this word to analyse state interactions in a simple and uncomplicated manner. When discussing structural changes in international systems, Wendt assumes two actors, Ego and Alter, who take different identities in their interactions. Wendt thinks that these interactions include two aspects, namely 'role-taking' and 'altercasting'.¹⁸⁵ In the meantime, Wendt also gave a few examples of the content of identities, for example: 'conqueror, explorer, trader, proselytizer'.¹⁸⁶

We can discern at least three points from Wendt's usage of 'identity' in his analysis. First, in using the terms 'Ego and Alter', Wendt is assuming that states can be compared to human individuals and possess unified, clear-cut identities. Indeed, Wendt anthropomorphizes states and argues that 'states are people too'.¹⁸⁷ Second, in saying 'role-taking' and 'altercasting', he is hinting that identity is 'something out there' that can be 'taken' and 'cast' by state actors – something that can be considered a case of reification. Third, the examples of state identities given by Wendt are usually one-word and all denote certain roles, which implies that state identity is equal to role and can be defined in a single word. All these show that Wendt's view and usage of 'identity' is oversimplified and vulnerable to the criticism of essentialism.

In fact, Wendt himself must have realised this danger because he puts several 'disclaimers' in his work. First, in the opening chapter of *Social Theory*, Wendt declares that his major research interest is in abstract

¹⁸⁵ Wendt, *Social Theory*, p.329.

¹⁸⁶ Ibid., p.329.

¹⁸⁷ Ibid., p. 215-224.

ontological discussion and that he will only dedicate a small part of his book to 'substantive theories': 'Even with respect to substantive theorizing, however, the level of abstraction and generality in this book are high. Readers looking for detailed propositions about the international system, let alone empirical tests, will be disappointed.'¹⁸⁸ Second, Wendt distances his theory from more radical versions of constructivism and labels it as 'a philosophically principled middle way' between traditional IR approaches and postmodernism. (In fact, he calls his version of theory 'thin constructivism'.)¹⁸⁹ Third, Wendt dedicates a chapter to defend scientific realism and argues that social science 'gives us knowledge, albeit always fallible, about the world out there.' He then argues that his theory is a '*via media*' between positivism and post-positivism.¹⁹⁰ Last but not least, to avoid the 'reification' accusation, Wendt argues that 'reification is sometimes useful' and asserts that for the purpose of convenience sometimes identities and interests should be treated as 'given'.¹⁹¹ He also stresses many times in his works that 'identities and interests are a continuing outcome of interaction, always in process' and 'sustained by interactions',¹⁹²

Despite all these 'disclaimers', Wendt's treatment of 'identity' is still relatively weak compared to the other parts of his theory. So it is not strange that such an oversimplified view of identity is vulnerable to attacks from other scholars. Moreover, Wendt himself did not provide any example of detailed analysis of state identity changes in his *Social Theory*, which further

¹⁸⁸ Ibid., p. 6.

¹⁸⁹ Ibid., p.2.

¹⁹⁰ Ibid., p.90.

¹⁹¹ Ibid., p.316.

¹⁹² For example, Wendt, *Social Theory*, p.316.

questioned the reliability of his simplified view of identity as an analytical tool. For example, choosing Wendt's state-centric view of identity as a target, Adamson and Demetriou challenge the view that the state can have a clear-cut identity 'coterminous' with the state boundary.¹⁹³ Zehfuss also points out the reifying problem lies in Wendt's concept of identity: 'Identity change is merely about shifting from one relatively stable identity to another. States are unitary actors with minds, desires and intensions.'¹⁹⁴ However, the most powerful critique of such an oversimplified view of identity comes from Brubaker and Cooper, which I will discuss below:

In 2000, Brubaker and Cooper published a paper *Beyond 'identity'* which soon established itself as one of the major works in the field of identity studies. This paper does not address Wendt directly but its critique of the usage of 'identity' is highly relevant to Wendt's simplified view of state identity. Despite being a paper on identity, the aim of Brubaker and Cooper in writing it was not to add more content to the term 'identity', but to dismantle it. In this paper, the two authors acutely questioned the validity of the term 'identity'. According to them, the word 'identity', after several decades of extensive usage in social science, had already become extremely vague and overladen. As a solution, they argue that scholars should discard the term 'identity' and opt for other terms to avoid ambiguity.

Brubaker and Cooper pay special attention to how constructivism deals with the term identity and highlight the common practice of 'stipulating that identities are constructed, fluid and multiple'. They argue that this 'attempt

¹⁹³ Fiona B. Adamson and Madeleine Demetriou, 'Remapping the Boundaries of "State" and "National Identity": Incorporating Diasporas into IR Theorizing', *European Journal of International Relations*. 13 (2007) 489-526 DOI: 10.1177/1354066107083145.

¹⁹⁴ Maja Zehfuss, *Constructivism in International Relations: The Politics of Reality* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2002), p.90.

to “soften” the term’ is not helpful at all.¹⁹⁵ According to Brubaker and Cooper, the use of the term ‘identity’ is so popular and abused in constructivist literature that it becomes part of ‘clichéd constructivism’. They argue:

‘Weak or soft conceptions of identity are routinely packaged with standard qualifiers indicating that identity is multiple, unstable, in flux, contingent, fragmented, constructed, negotiated, and so on. These qualifiers have become so familiar – indeed obligatory – in recent years that one reads (and writes) them virtually automatically. They risk becoming mere place-holders, gestures signalling a stance rather than words conveying a meaning.’¹⁹⁶

Such trenchant criticism indeed deals a heavy blow to the popular usage of ‘identity’ in constructivist literature – Wendt’s definition of identity is certainly not immune to it. Why is this so? Brubaker and Cooper point out that the reason lies in the innate connection between the term ‘identity’ and its everyday meaning, which always refers to some essential attributes of a person (‘hard understanding’¹⁹⁷ of identity, in Brubaker and Cooper’s own words) Therefore, no matter how one stresses the belief that ‘identity’ is constructed and fluid, there is always a hint that something tangible is out there – the essentialist connotation of ‘identity’ could never be wiped out. Even if the theoretician manages to ‘soften’ the concept of identity, the term will become ‘too weak to do useful theoretical work’, argue Brubaker and Cooper, ‘in their insistence that that identities are multiple, malleable, fluid,

¹⁹⁵ Rogers Brubaker and Frederick Cooper, ‘Beyond “identity”’, *Theory and Society*, 29 (2000), 1-47, p.1.

¹⁹⁶ *Ibid.*, p.11.

¹⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, p.10.

and so on, soft identitarians leave us with a term so infinitely elastic as to be incapable of performing serious analytical work.’¹⁹⁸

If ‘identity’ is already hopelessly vague and clichéd, what kind of terms should be used instead? Brubaker and Cooper recommend the use of three alternatives, namely ‘identification’, ‘self-understanding’ and ‘commonality/connectedness’. The first term, identification, derives from the verb ‘identify’ and is therefore less vulnerable to reification. By using ‘identification, as Brubaker and Cooper argue, the readers’ attention will be drawn to the one who identifies – ‘it invites us to specify the agents that do the identifying.’¹⁹⁹ To be more specific, the identifier could be one’s self (‘self-identification’), or others (‘external identification’). Brubaker and Cooper point out that the modern state is also one of the most powerful identifiers and this identifying process can be understood in a Foucauldian, discursive way.²⁰⁰ However, as Brubaker and Cooper put it, ‘even the most powerful state does not monopolize the production and diffusion of identifications and categories; and those that it does produce may be contested.’²⁰¹ The third term, self-understanding, denotes the subjective experience of an actor: ‘one’s sense of who one is, of one’s social location, and of how (given the first two) one is prepared to act.’²⁰² In other words, the term ‘self-understanding’ can replace the ‘soft’ understanding of identity (which is always in a flux) and thus avoid the essentialist connotation of the term ‘identity’. According to Brubaker and Cooper, ‘self-understanding’ is not very different from ‘self-identification’ – the only difference is that self-

¹⁹⁸ Ibid., p.11.

¹⁹⁹ Ibid., p.14.

²⁰⁰ Ibid., p.15.

²⁰¹ Ibid., p.16.

²⁰² Ibid., p.17.

identification 'suggests at least some degree of explicit discursive articulation'.²⁰³ The last alternative to 'identity' actually consists of two closely related terms, namely commonality and connectedness. The two are used to replace 'identity' when it denotes 'sameness among group members'. Brubaker and Cooper argue that 'identity' fails to show the difference between mere sympathizers of a group (commonality) and the actual group members (connectedness).²⁰⁴

In the above part I have reviewed Wendt's view of identity and highlighted its vulnerability, which comes from the innate essentialist connotation of the term 'identity'. I have also introduced Brubaker and Cooper's critique of 'identity' and their solution. Hence, taking these into consideration, should we keep, or discard the term 'identity' in this thesis on Sino-Vatican relations? Regarding this question, my answer is this: I will follow Brubaker and Cooper's advice and use 'identification' and 'self-understanding' to replace the vague term 'identity'. However, considering some merits of 'identity', I will keep this term in some cases to denote 'a snapshot of discourse'. In the following part I shall justify my claim.

In a study on Sino-Vatican relations, the terms 'identification' and 'self-understanding' have great advantage over the traditional term 'identity' because they allow for more nuances in this relationship than the traditional term does. In fact, if I wish to show the 'constructivist' process in the Beijing-Rome interactions, Wendt's simplified model is far from enough. His original way of defining state identities with one-word nouns (e.g. friends, enemies, proselytizers) is overly essentialist and actually has unavoidable connotations of the 'rationalist model' he critiqued. If I follow Wendt's original analytical model, then the mutual 'identities' between Rome and Beijing in

²⁰³ Ibid., p.18.

²⁰⁴ Ibid., p.20.

the 1950s could only be defined as ‘enemies’ – but how will that be different from the Myers’ notion of *Enemies without Guns*? Indeed, no matter how I stress the idea that identities between Rome and Beijing are constructed, fluid and in constant change, the analytical framework will be not much different from the ‘clichéd constructivism’ critiqued by Brubaker and Cooper.

By contrast, Brubaker and Cooper’s alternative terms give me new analytical possibilities in this study on Sino-Vatican relations. Firstly, using the term ‘identification’ in this thesis will draw readers’ attention to the ongoing identifying process between Beijing and Rome. In fact, the picture of this process is more complicated than the notion of ‘identity’ can show. For example, during the interactions between the two governments, the cases where both take clear-cut ‘identities’ towards each other are actually very rare. In latter part of the thesis I will show that in the 1950s, Beijing identifies Rome as a ‘troublemaker’ but also tacitly regards Rome as the ‘giver of authority’ in the Catholic Church and made some attempts to ‘borrow’ some authority from Rome. Here, the term ‘identification’ works better than the rigid ‘identity’ because it can show the hidden, inner contradiction in this process.

Apart from the above point, the use of ‘identification’ and ‘categorisation’ encourages readers to think about ‘who is the identifier and who is the target of identification’ in Beijing-Rome interactions. This differentiation could not be shown by the traditional usage of ‘identity’. In fact, the question of ‘who identifies and who is the target’ is very important in Sino-Vatican interactions. As state governments, both Beijing and Rome are powerful identifiers. How they identify each other and how they categorise the church in China bears huge influence on the outcome of Sino-Vatican interaction. First, how Rome and Beijing identify each other will determine what kind of action they take against each other. For example, when the People’s Republic of China was established in 1949, Rome had different options to identify it – should Beijing be regarded as the continuation of the traditional

Chinese state, another satellite state of the Soviet Union, or an independent nationalist republic? Indeed, considering the historical circumstances, all these options have their respective reasons, but how Rome decided to identify Beijing would determine the actions it would take towards Beijing. If Rome identifies Beijing as 'another communist regime', then the action to be taken will be largely drawn from Rome's previous experience of dealing with a 'typical communist regime'. Similarly, how Beijing categorises Rome would determine Beijing's Catholic policy. Should Rome and the church in China be considered a potential supporter, a sympathizer of the KMT regime, a fully-fledged religion, a spy organisation or a superstitious cult? Such categorisation is hugely influential in the making of Beijing's religious policies.

Beside the mutual identification between Beijing and Rome, how the two regimes categorise Chinese Catholics is equally important to the outcome of Sino-Vatican interaction. The traditional term 'identity' is ill-suited for describing this categorisation process. Both Beijing and Rome regard Chinese Catholics as their citizens and attempt to categorise and differentiate them according to their perceived loyalty. On the Chinese side, Beijing categorised Catholics into two major categories in the 1950s, namely 'patriotic Catholics' and 'reactionaries'. According to the regime's need, such categorisation could be modified into more detailed versions. For example, in the mid-1950s, Beijing's internal documents categorised Catholics in China into three groups: high-ranking clergymen, who were usually more conservative and pro-Vatican; low-ranking priests, who were more likely to cooperate with the government; ordinary Catholic laity, who should be educated via 'publicity campaigns'. The aim of such categorisations was to apply different policies to different groups. On the other hand, Rome also categorise Chinese Catholics according to their closeness to Rome – an antithesis between 'loyal Catholics' and 'compromised ones' existed in Rome's categorisation in the 1950s. Rome

used various ways to encourage the 'loyal' group and meted out punishments (e.g. shunning, excommunications) against the 'compromised' ones. To sum up, the different categorisations adopted by Beijing and Rome allow them to apply different policies to different sectors within the church in China and therefore reach a 'divide-and-rule' effect. When a zero-sum mind-set prevailed in Sino-Vatican interactions, one's imposition of its categorisation on Chinese Catholics was at the expense of the other side. I believe that Brubaker and Cooper's concept of 'categorisation' is better than the term 'identity' in discussing this process.

Last but not least, the traditional term 'identity' would not show the dynamics of the state ideology formation. The process by which states attempt to impose ideologies on its citizens cannot be faithfully reflected by the essentialist term 'identities'. As Brubaker and Cooper point out, despite being powerful identifiers, states are unable to monopolize the identification process, let alone citizens' self-understanding. Facing the categorisations and ideologies offered by the state, citizens have the possibility not only to comply with, but also to resist them. I base this claim on the fact that the so-called 'corporate identity' of a state is not the same as individual consciousness. To be more specific, although in IR studies states are often regarded as similar to human beings (e.g. Wendt's argument 'states are people too' ²⁰⁵), the 'self-understanding' at state level is quite different from the individual counterparts. A state is a leviathan made of tens of millions of citizens. It is impossible that all the citizens could ever share the same thought. Even the most totalitarian regime could not manage to completely unify the ideas of its citizens. Hence, in this respect, the state is certainly different from individual human beings.

²⁰⁵ Wendt, *Social Theory*, p.215.

In order to maintain the coherence of the state, the government (especially those of non-liberal democratic regimes) tends to offer its desired version of a 'thought paradigm' (ideology) to the citizens. In other words, the government dictates statements of 'how you should be' to the citizens and attempts to change their self-understanding. To ensure that such dictation is successful, the government will use its power – all kinds of means, persuasive or coercive, to make the citizens follow the state ideology. However, in my opinion, individual citizens have the possibility of accepting or resisting the identities offered by the state. And the resistance from the citizens will compel the state to adjust its policy: it either can become more coercive to force the citizens to accept the state ideology; or can opt for a more benign policy and make compromises regarding the desired version of the ideology.

Viewing Sino-Vatican interaction from this perspective, the self-understanding and self-identification of Chinese Catholics becomes an important variable. Because Rome does not have its own territory and people, the two governments are sharing citizens. In this circumstance, each government offers Catholics in China their version of the desired state ideology. In turn, Catholics in China have the possibility of accepting or refusing at least part of them. Such feedback will be closely monitored by the two governments and will make them adjust policies, which will ultimately influence the outcome of Sino-Vatican interaction. To sum up, this is a process of 'ideology feeding – feedback – monitoring – policy changing'. In this process, ideology feeding is not one-way (from states to citizens), but two-directional because the citizens have the option to boycott the state versions of ideologies. This process is more salient in Sino-Vatican relations than it is in any other inter-state relations because Beijing and Rome share Chinese Catholics as their citizens. In the latter parts of this thesis we will see more details of such a triangular ideology feeding process. Briefly, this process of ideology imposition and its resistance from citizens could be aptly

reflected by the usage of more differentiated terms (identification, categorisation) instead of the rigid term 'identity'.

In sum, I have explained the reason why I opt for Brubaker and Cooper's alternative terms instead of the traditional concept of 'identity'. I argue that compared to the traditional term of 'identity', 'identification' and 'categorisation' have several advantages. First, they do not have strong essentialist connotations and draw attention to the ongoing process. Second, the new terms work better than the term 'identity' in reflecting the three aspects of Sino-Vatican interaction, namely mutual identification between Rome and Beijing; the relationship between categorisation of Catholic and state policy; and the state's effort to change citizens' self-understanding. In the analysis of Sino-Vatican relations, Brubaker and Cooper's alternatives perform better than the undifferentiated term 'identity' and convey far more nuances than 'identity' does. Therefore, in this research I will mainly use the terms suggested by Brubaker and Cooper. However, considering the current popularity of the term 'identity' in today's academic work and its prevalence in social science, I will not abandon the term 'identity' completely: while avoiding its undifferentiated use, I will regard it as a shorthand denoting a moment of the identification process. In other words, when I occasionally use the word 'identity' in this thesis, readers are advised to think of it as a 'point' in the ongoing constructivist process.

Discourse

In the above section I have discussed the traditional concept of identity and the critique of it. I have also explained why I prefer Brubaker and Cooper's terms to 'identity'. After this clarification, now I need to answer the question 'how to investigate the identification process'. My answer to this is discourse analysis. The rationale, put very briefly, is this: the entire constructivist process (identification, categorisation and self-understanding) is mediated

and completed via discourses. Therefore, by analysing discourse, we can understand the constructivist process in Sino-Vatican relations and reach a depth unrivalled by previous research that depends on the interpretation of historical events from the perspective of pre-given identities. In the following part I will define what discourse is and explain what I mean by 'discourse analysis'. After that, I will build an analytical framework which will be used in the main body of this thesis.

What Kind of Discourse Analysis?

Firstly, this thesis will attempt to clarify what we mean by 'discourse analysis'. In fact, like 'identity', the term 'discourse analysis' is another vague term in the humanities because it covers such a wide range of academic areas. Without a proper definition, it is hard to know what kind of 'discourse analysis' we are involved in.

Let us start from the word 'discourse'. Following *the Oxford English Dictionary's* definition, we can see that the everyday usage of this word implies 'written or spoken communication or debate; a formal discussion of a topic in speech or writing'. Thus, it is not hard to discern the word's close relationship to language and linguistics. In fact, it was the linguists who first coined this term.

In 1952, the term 'discourse analysis' saw its first usage in Zellig Harris's paper *Discourse Analysis*, in which Harris described the method simply as 'the analysis of connected speech'.²⁰⁶ He further pointed out that the aim of such analysis is to study language at a macro level and find out the connection between language and cultural context.²⁰⁷ In many aspects,

²⁰⁶ Zellig Harris, 'Discourse Analysis', *Language*, 28 (1952), 1-30 (p.1) DOI: 10.2307/409987.

²⁰⁷ Ibid.

Harris's discourse analysis is similar to algebra as he used symbols to represent different components of connected speech/writing. To be more specific, letters (a, b, c...) are used to denote a unit in the analysed text until the entire text was simplified into a series of letters. In this way, Harris hoped to find out the deeper structure of the target text and reveal the connections between different parts of it. However, Harris' prototypical method can only be used to deal with uncomplicated texts with many repetitive elements (Harris himself took a short paragraph from a 'hair tonic' advertisement as an example) and is ill-suited for longer, complicated or vague texts. Hence, despite being credited as the first example of discourse analysis, Harris's method has largely been forgotten by today's researchers. Nevertheless, this thesis is indebted to Harris not only because he is the father of discourse analysis; but also because he invented the concept of a 'chain of equivalence' – I shall return to this concept later on in this chapter.

In Harris's original articulation of discourse analysis (DA), we can already see that the methodology of DA has its focus on the rules behind ordinary language activities. In the following decades, DA has become a multidisciplinary and highly heterogeneous methodology. Although it originated from the field of linguistics, we can now see its application in almost all the subjects in the humanities and social sciences. DA can be used in the study of applied linguistics and language teaching, in which it can help teachers to improve the teaching outcome; it can be used in a medical context; it can be used to analyse the language in advertisements and the media; it can be adopted to expose the hidden inequality, sexism and racism in everyday language and help activists in their pursuit of a more equal society. In addition to its wide usage in many academic fields, DA also enjoys a diversity of study objects, which vary from individuals to groups; from communities to nations and states; from spoken/written texts and gestures to video clips.

Due to its wide academic usage, scholars from different fields may have quite different approaches and focuses in doing discourse analysis. But most analysts will agree that the aim of DA is to find out the hidden rules and implicit meanings under the surface of language. It is not a study about isolated words and sentences, but about language-in-use, namely language use in its context and the relationship between different kinds of language use.

By saying language use in context we are actually touching upon one of the most important features of doing discourse analysis: that the material should always come from naturally occurring usage of language and never be abstracted outside its context. Hence, in conducting our research, the analysis will be based on naturally occurring textual²⁰⁸ exchanges between China and the Vatican. When analysing these texts, this research will always take into consideration their historical context and the relationship between different texts.

Definition of ‘Discourse’

A clear-cut definition of the term ‘discourse’ is surprisingly hard to find. Jorgensen and Phillips point out that “‘discourse’ has been a fashionable term. In scientific texts and debates, it is used indiscriminately, often without being defined.”²⁰⁹ Mills argues that ‘discourse’ is both popular and ill-defined: ‘The term “discourse” has become common currency in a variety of disciplines ... so much so that it is frequently left undefined, as if its usage

²⁰⁸ The term ‘text’ here refers to the actual object of analysis in our research – the Sino-Vatican language exchanges in the form of written/transcribed text, which is the manifestation of discourse.

²⁰⁹ Marianne Jorgensen and Louise Philips, *Discourse Analysis as Theory and Method* (London: SAGE Publications, 2002), p.1.

were simply common knowledge... It has perhaps the widest range of possible signification of any term in literary and cultural theory, and yet it is often the term within theoretical texts which is least defined.²¹⁰ The term's definition becomes vague as it has different meanings in different contexts. According to Bloor and Bloor, the main uses of the word 'discourse' include: (1) 'all the phenomena of symbolic interaction between people' (2) 'spoken interaction' (3) the 'whole act of communication involving production' (4) 'communication that takes place in specific institutional contexts' (5) 'a particular text.'²¹¹ In the light of the high diversity of the meanings of the term, a clear definition of 'discourse' and 'analysis' is needed to suit our research purpose.

This research, following the tradition of social-constructivism and post-structuralism and inspired especially by Laclau and Mouffe's discourse theory, defines the term 'discourse' as **a language system regulating a certain social area, which is the only way to perceive reality. Identification, categorisation and self-understanding are all mediated and completed by this language system. The snapshot of such a system is called 'identity'**. Using such a definition, I hope to connect the concept of identification with its underlying linguistic process and therefore make it analysable. In the following part I will explain this definition and discuss its implication for the analysis.

In saying that discourse is a language system, I am returning to the linguistic root of this concept. Indeed, originating from the study of linguistics, the concept of discourse has always maintained its relationship with language. Indeed, almost all previous definitions of this concept would contain

²¹⁰ Sara Mills, *Discourse* (London: Routledge, 1997), p.1.

²¹¹ Meriel Bloor and Thomas Bloor, *The Practice of Critical Discourse Analysis: An Introduction* (London: Hodder Arnold, 2007), pp. 6-7.

keywords such as ‘speaking’ ‘communication’ ‘text’ ‘speech’ – all of them belong to the field of language. In this respect, the term ‘discourse’ is far less ambiguous than ‘identity’ because almost all major definitions agree that it is made of elements of human language. In this research, I define ‘discourse’ as a part of the human language system that regulates a certain social area – hence there are many kinds of discourses (e.g. political, economic, religious) and each can be considered a guideline of ‘how one should speak and behave’ in a given social context.

Regarding discourse’s relationship with knowledge, this research subscribes to Laclau and Mouffe’s view that discourse is people’s only way of perceiving reality. Indeed, among discourse analysts there is no consensus about whether there are any realities ‘outside discourse’. In other words, should there be any distinction between ‘discourse’ and ‘non-discursive matters’? Faced with these questions, Laclau and Mouffe deny that there are any pre-discursive/non-discursive realities and argue that ‘every object is constituted as an object of discourse’.²¹² To further illustrate this point, they argue:

‘An earthquake or the falling of a brick is an event that certainly exists, in the sense that it occurs here and now, independently of my will. But whether their specificity as objects is constructed in terms of “natural phenomena” or “expressions of the wrath of God”, depends upon the structuring of a discursive field.’²¹³

In fact, Laclau and Mouffe’s viewpoint agrees with the constructivist/post-structuralist premise that there are no absolute objective facts in the world. The reality is constructed by the subject’s way of interpretation. This is not

²¹² Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe, *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy: Towards a Radical Democratic Politics* (London: Verso, 2001), p.107.

²¹³ Ibid., p.108.

to deny the existence of material facts, but only to argue that how the subject perceives the facts is essential. As Jorgensen and Phillips point out:

‘with language, we create representations of reality that are never mere reflections of a pre-existing reality but contribute to constructing reality. That does not mean that reality itself does not exist. Meanings and representations are real. Physical objects also exist, but they only gain meaning through discourse.’²¹⁴

With this view in mind, the discourses in which the leadership of China and the Vatican were situated would determine how the leaders in the two countries interpret the facts. In Sino-Vatican relations, the governments of China and the Holy See will ‘decode’ the facts via their respective discourses. As they may follow dramatically different discourses, they may interpret an action very differently. In their interaction history, we can often see that an act intended by one party as a friendly gesture could be perceived by the other party as offensive. In fact, discourses impose strong constraints on Sino-Vatican relations. As discourse is the ‘lens’ through which the subject perceives reality, it will actually delimit the subject’s boundary of thinking. Discourse will prescribe what is meaningful and what is not. There are some utterances that will never be uttered because they are deemed as ‘not meaningful’ by the discourse. States (including China and the Vatican) are run by human beings, and human beings are highly social. With regard to language, there is no such thing as a ‘private language’ because every case of language use, even only in somebody’s own mind, is acquired from the social. The same applies to discourse – there is no action made by members without the guidance of the discourse system. Following the same logic, the entire identification/categorisation process, including the formation of self-understanding, are all mediated and

²¹⁴ Jorgensen and Phillips, p.9.

regulated by discourse. Hence, in order to get insights into the identification process we have to study the related discourses.

Now let us consider the history of Sino-Vatican relations again from a discursive perspective. Sino-Vatican relations are always under the strong constraint of discourses. In the 18th century, China and Catholicism had a short 'honeymoon' period thanks to the efforts of the Jesuits in China. But the inter-governmental relationship suddenly turned sour in the Chinese Rite Controversy, which was caused by the conflict between the Confucian discourse and its counterpart held by the Holy See. In the early 20th century, the Holy See managed to build a good relationship with the KMT government in China. This was the result of the Holy See's better understanding towards the KMT discourse and its willingness to cooperate with the KMT regime. The discourses in the Chinese Catholic Church in the 1940s show clear signs of convergence with the KMT state ideology. However, the Holy See's affiliation with KMT discourse became a historical burden after 1949, when the communists controlled mainland China. We can see from Sino-Vatican interaction history in the 1950s that the Holy See tried to maintain the previous discourse in the Chinese Catholic Church, which nevertheless proved to be unacceptable to the patriotic discourse established by the People's Republic. In the following nine years (1949-1958) the discourse system in China and the Vatican saw many major changes, and state behaviour also changed greatly following the discursive change. Indeed, discourse is not an unchangeable, static system. With the passage of time, the structure of discourse will also be changed by the agency of members. Sometimes the change is so great that the new discourse system is almost unintelligible to the former one. This process is similar to the linguistic relationship between Old English and Latin compared to Modern English and Italian. In the first decade of Beijing-Rome interaction, the discourse systems in China and the Vatican have undergone major changes. And it is this process of change to which this research pays

special attention. In other words, this research aims to analyse the discursive changes related to Sino-Vatican relations from 1949 to 1958 and find the reasons behind these changes – which is the agency of the members in the discourse system.

3.4 Analytical Framework: How to Study Discourses in Sino-Vatican Relations

In the above sections, I have tried to lay a theoretical foundation for substantive research on Sino-Vatican relations. I have defined discourse as the language system regulating a certain social area and the only way to perceive reality. However, up to now the discussion is still at the level of abstract concepts and I need to apply them to the actual analysis. Hence, in this section I will try to build an analytical framework tailored for this research.

My analytical model is based on Laclau and Mouffe's discourse theory. The two authors consider themselves 'post-Marxist', which means that they build their theory based on critical appraisal of the traditional Marxist beliefs. However, unlike traditional Marxism, Laclau and Mouffe reject the dogma of 'orthodox' Marxism that there is a unified 'working-class' and a universal class struggle and 'Revolution' against Capitalism. They argue that this notion is an essentialist idea, which was deeply affected by historical determinism. In their critique of orthodox Marxism, Laclau and Mouffe developed their own theory of discourse. Their definition of 'discourse' is based on four concepts, namely articulation, discourse, moments and element:

'We will call articulation any practice establishing a relation among elements such that their identity is modified as a result of the articulatory practice. The structured totality resulting from the articulatory practice,

we will call discourse. The differential positions, insofar as they appear articulated within a discourse, we will call moments. By contrast, we will call element any difference that is not discursively articulated.²¹⁵

This definition is highly abstract and can only be understood in the context of structuralism and post-structuralism. Structuralism, as a school of philosophy, is based on the linguistic theory of Saussure, which argues that (a) the relationship between signifier and signified is arbitrary²¹⁶ and (b) the meaning of a signifier comes from its positional difference from other signifiers in the same language system.²¹⁷ It could be argued that the structuralist view of a language system is like a huge net interwoven with signifiers, whose meanings depend on the relative position between them. Post-structuralism accepts the structuralist view of language as a 'fishing-net' made of signifiers that are different from each other, but denies that this 'fishing-net' is static and unchangeable.²¹⁸ The names and contents of the signifiers in this 'net' are always subject to changes and re-definitions. Here we come to the starting point of Laclau and Mouffe's definition of discourse.

According to Laclau and Mouffe, discourse is the totality of *moments*. And moments are articulated signifiers. To be more specific, Laclau and Mouffe differentiate between two kinds of signifiers, namely the *elements* and *moments*. And *elements* can be turned into *moments* by means of *articulation*. To articulate is to reduce the multiple meanings in *elements*, fix

²¹⁵ Laclau and Mouffe, p.105.

²¹⁶ Ferdinand de Saussure, *Course in General Linguistics*, trans. by Roy Harris (London: Gerald Duckworth, 2005), p. 67.

²¹⁷ Ibid., p. 113. 'A language is a system in which all elements fit together, and in which the value of any one element depends on the simultaneous coexistence of all the others.'

²¹⁸ I borrowed the term 'fishing-net', which I think is a very good depiction of structuralism, from Jorgensen and Philips, p.25.

one meaning while driving the rest of meanings to the *field of discursivity*. On the other hand, to articulate elements is to create relations between different elements and create a chain of equivalence, in which many signifiers are connected with each other (as if an 'equal sign =' is drawn between them). In creating a chain of equivalence, a chain of difference would also be formed, which shows the opposite meanings in the chain of equivalence. It is by the chains of equivalence and their chains of difference that the political boundary is drawn and the identities of 'self' and 'others' are formed.

The aim of political actors is to establish their own *hegemony* in the discourse system. To realise this, they need to use every means to fix the meaning of the signs in the discourse, and this process is called *hegemonic intervention*. A successful hegemonic intervention can suppress all the competing meanings in the system and realise a temporary *hegemony*. In this circumstance, the meaning of signs in the discursive 'fishing net' were partially fixed and reach a relative stable condition. (As have discussed before, I will use the term 'identity' to denote such a point in time when *hegemony* is achieved in discourse.) However, the signs in the discourse are always fluid and any hegemony is contingent. The signs will be open to further challenges and the temporary hegemony can be weakened and subverted.

If we apply Laclau and Mouffe's theory to our current study, then the linguistic phenomena and communications between the PRC government and the Holy See can be regarded as a discourse sustained by key signifiers and chains of equivalence. In this discursive structure, the two parties are always trying to gain the upper hand and try to establish hegemony in the discourse related to the Chinese Catholic Church.

In the Sino-Vatican dispute over the Catholic Church, Beijing and Rome are contesting *within a 'Catholic' discourse system*. In saying that we imply that

the two parties are trying to fix the definitions of a series of key signifiers in a category named 'Catholicism'. This point will become clearer if we make a comparison between the officially-sanctioned church in China and the Church of England during the English Reformation. Many people pointed out that the establishment of the officially-sanctioned church in China is similar to the founding of the Church of England, where the secular ruler used his/her power to force the church's separation from Rome. It is true that the two historical events bear many resemblances. However here I would argue that there is a crucial difference between the officially-sanctioned church in China and the Church of England in that the Catholic Church in China was never ordered by the government to become fully independent in name.

It could be argued that being fully independent in name does not make a huge difference as the church in China is usually under the government's strong intervention and was forbidden to obey Rome freely during the 1950s. But no matter how Beijing and Rome clashed with each other, the church in China was still allowed to carry the name 'Catholic'. The PRC government legally recognises the existence of the Catholic Church in China and, according to Chinese law, Catholics have the freedom to profess their religion and the religious activities of Catholicism are protected by law.

Those who are critical of the Chinese government would see these freedoms and protection promised by law with disapproval and regard them as paying only lip-service. However, I would like to point out that the recognition and protection granted by Chinese law to the Catholic Church leaves a permanent discursive ground for Beijing and Rome to contest. The Chinese Catholic Church, as long as it carries the name 'Catholic', can never escape the influence of Rome.

In the English case, the monarch was installed as the supreme leader of the church, removing the authority of the Pope. During the English Reformation,

the Church of England was created, the Pope's influence was totally denied and Catholicism was purged and deemed illegal. In the state discourse, the ruler created a new sign 'Church of England' while scrapping the old sign 'Roman Catholic' and trying to make the Catholic Church invisible. But in China, the government has kept the sign 'Catholic', which has never disappeared from the official discourse and public sight. The fact that the sign 'Catholic' was kept in China has huge implications for the development of the church in China. The Church of England, though highly similar to Catholicism in its early years, gradually drifted away from Rome in terms of dogma. The rift between the Church of England and Catholicism became great enough that today few doubt that they are independent from each other. (The recent ordination of female priests has made the rift greater). However, in China, instead of drifting away from Rome, the Chinese Church keeps closely to Rome in dogmatic aspects.

In sum, in the post-1949 Chinese Catholic Church, the signifiers of the discourse of Catholicism were kept and maintained. The nodal points in the 'fishing-net' are still there, keeping the same names and are open to challenges. The PRC government and the Holy See are still playing in the same arena. They are struggling with each other to establish hegemony in the discursive system. With their hegemonic interventions, both players are turning elements into moments via articulation. The signs in the Chinese Catholic Church's discourse were connected, interwoven with each other and chains of equivalence were created. But no matter how hard the two governments try to fix the meaning of the key signifiers and drive the other meanings into the field of discursivity, the signifiers can only be temporarily fixed. The struggle over the Chinese Church's discourse persisted for the whole of the 1950s and this research will endeavour to reveal this process of struggle.

In order to apply Laclau and Mouffe's discourse theory to actual research and realize the aim of revealing the structure and agency in Sino-Vatican

discourse, 4 steps are developed as guidelines for our analysis, shown below:

Step 1: Identify a 'flashpoint' and locate important texts (documents/speeches).

Step 2: Analyse the major texts. Find out the key signifiers and their definitions in the text and try to summarise them into chains of equivalence.

Step 3: Evaluate the ambiguities in the text and discuss how it affects Beijing-Rome interactions.

Step 4: Investigate the changes that occurred in the discourse system, namely in the nodal points and chains of equivalence. Discuss how these changes in discourse affect identities in Sino-Vatican relations.

In this section I attempt to explain in detail my framework for analysis.

By carrying out step 1 I hope to draw the reader's attention to the research focus and to clarify what are, and are not, the aims of this research. Despite the fact that this research draws heavily on historical books, documents and sources, my aim in this thesis is not to provide another comprehensive historical work on the topic, but to give insights into the discourse and identify the formation process. Therefore, instead of covering all the details of the target time periods, my research will only focus on the 'flashpoints' in Sino-Vatican relations. By 'flashpoints' I mean the events that exert significant impact on the Beijing-Rome relationship. As their name suggests, flashpoints entail clashes between the two governments. In most cases during the target periods, the clashes between Beijing and Rome occurred in a fierce manner – both sides vehemently expressing their accusations and taking hostile actions towards each other. But in some cases, there was no open crossfire between the two sides and the clashes between them unfolded in a hidden and subtle manner. Indeed, many of these hidden flashpoints were totally ignored by previous historians on this topic. Therefore, by focusing on flashpoints instead of the entire historical records,

I aim to carry out a more in-depth analysis of the state identity changes than previous works on Sino-Vatican relations; by drawing the reader's attention to the 'hidden flashpoints', I hope to show a more nuanced picture of identity articulation between Beijing and Rome.

In fact, a 'flashpoint' in Sino-Vatican relations can be regarded as a 'snapshot' of discourse and the process of identification is part of this snapshot. Discourse is a concept denoting process (something in a constant flux) and 'flashpoints' are points in this process. To be more specific, although showing fluidity in Sino-Vatican relations is one of the major aims of this research, by starting from 'flashpoints' I hope to draw readers' attention to the relatively 'static' points in discourses between Beijing and Rome for two reasons.

First, it allows comparison of different time points and lets us understand better the changes that occurred in Sino-Vatican relations. Starting from a flashpoint and taking a 'snapshot' of the underlying discourse enables me to carry out a comparison of different time points in Sino-Vatican discourses. By these comparisons we will understand better how great the differences were between the previous discourses and more recent ones.

Second, by starting from 'flashpoints' I hope to reflect the 'temporary fixation' in Laclau and Mouffe's discourse theory and draw readers' attention to the relatively stable 'moments' in discourse. According to Laclau and Mouffe, the meanings of signifiers in a discourse could never be totally fixed, but on the other hand 'there have to be partial fixations'.²¹⁹ If not, the differences between different signifiers could not be maintained and the 'fishing net' of discourse will fall apart. In other words, we need to be

²¹⁹ Laclau and Mouffe, p.112.

cautious not to put too much focus on the fluid side of discourse – its status at given time points is also important to the analysis.

The second action in step 1 is locating important texts. Unlike previous work on Sino-Vatican relations, this research is based on in-depth textual analysis. Even though I have limited the research scope to the ‘flashpoints’, it is impossible to analyse all the details of Beijing-Rome interactions. Hence, my analysis will focus on the key texts (including speech transcriptions) at these flashpoints. So what can be counted as ‘important texts’? The selection criteria are threefold: first, the text should come from the documents officially issued/endorsed by the two governments (or quoted by these official documents); second, the text should exert huge influence on Catholics in China. For example, papal messages regarding China would usually have a large impact in the minds of Chinese Catholics; third, the text should, preferably, reveal traits of the ‘thinking process’ of state leadership. For example, documents from Beijing often include comments and evaluations of the recent gestures made by Rome – these texts can certainly help us understand more about how interactions influence Sino-Vatican relations. To sum up, with these criteria I hope to focus my analysis on the most important texts in Sino-Vatican relations. The analysis of these texts will show the process of identity articulation between Beijing and Rome.

Now comes step two. After focusing on flashpoints and locating key texts, my task now is to carry out detailed analysis of them. How should this be done? Indeed, a major difficulty in doing this research is that the original texts in Sino-Vatican relations are not easy pieces for discourse analysis. The texts are very different from each other in style; some are extremely long (e.g. papal encyclicals) and defy word-by-word analysis; let alone the fact that they are originally written in different languages. So is there any way to build a coherent structure for these original sources? As have discussed in the last section, I will use Laclau and Mouffe’s concept of a

‘chain of equivalence’ to organise my analysis and the interaction between Beijing and Rome will be regarded as a struggle where both governments strive for a discursive hegemony among Chinese Catholics. I believe this is an effective and succinct way to conduct such analysis. The method of dealing with a key text would be like this:

(1) An introduction to the background and main content of the text will be given. (e.g. under what condition was the document issued? Who was the author of the document? Who were the intended audience? Why is it important?)

(2) Locate the nodal points (key signifiers). As determined by my research focus, the nodal points I chose are those most connected with identity formation. They either directly refer to state governments (e.g. ‘The Roman Curia’), or hint at them (e.g. ‘the one who seeks earthly power and interests’), or denote the groups within the church crucial to the Sino-Vatican contests (e.g. ‘Bishops’ ‘Imperialist elements’)

(3) Find out how these nodal points are connected with other signifiers and arrange them into chains of equivalence. For example, in a papal letter, how does the nodal point hint at Beijing’s connection with other signifiers? (e.g. Beijing = the one who persecutes the church = preventing bishops from exercising their authority) Similarly, what was the situation in Beijing’s documents? What kind of identities did they convey?

(4) See whether a chain of difference was constructed. More often than not, a chain of equivalence implies a chain of difference. For example, in the apostolic letter *Cupimus Imprimis*, the Pope used many words to illustrate the transcendent nature of Catholicism and stressed that the only aim of the church was ‘to pursue celestial things’. Therefore, the Pope constructed a chain of equivalence ‘the church = the entity aiming at celestial things’. However, in doing so he also implicitly created a chain of difference: ‘the

church's opponent (Beijing) = the one who seeks earthly gains and interests). The creation of chains of equivalence and chains of difference were prevalent in Sino-Vatican interactions and they give many insights into the identity construction process between Beijing and Rome.

In sum, with the above procedure I attempt to illustrate the identification process in Sino-Vatican relations in a clear and succinct way. However, using the concept of chain of equivalence alone we may still miss many nuances in Sino-Vatican identity articulation. Hence the need to carry out the next step of the analysis.

In step 3, after revealing the chains of equivalence (and difference) I will draw the reader's attention to the ambiguities in Sino-Vatican interactions. By 'ambiguities' I mean the linguistic elements in the original texts that are open to different interpretations. In fact, ambiguities are widespread in the documents and speeches in Sino-Vatican relations. Sometimes a friendly message could be interpreted as unfriendly due to different interpretations. For example, a papal message that intended to show a benign message to Beijing could be interpreted as implicitly subversive due to the wording and style. Vice versa, even in Beijing's seemingly hostile messages towards Rome there could be some subtle signs reflecting a desire for reconciliation. So how did these ambiguities come into being in the first place? Is there any linguistic basis for these and are there any unintended messages conveyed? In sum, in this step I hope to reveal an important aspect of Sino-Vatican interactions that have been rarely noticed by previous authors.

In the last step, based on the analysis done in the previous steps, I will try to track the changes that occurred in the discourses in Sino-Vatican relations. The questions I would like to ask during this step include: are there any differences between a certain chain of equivalence/difference and similar chains in the past? If so, what is the reason behind such change? How does this change affect identity construction? For example, when

comparing the documents issued by Beijing in the late 1950s with those issued in the early 1950s, it can be clearly seen that the chains of equivalence regarding the Vatican had undergone many changes.

3.5 The Time Period to be Studied and the Main Sources

Time Period Selection

The time period to be studied in this research is 1949-1958. So what is the rationale behind this choice of research periods? First and foremost, this period, according to my point of view, is the most crucial period in PRC-Vatican relations because the two actors had completed a full round of identity articulation – the two ‘deadlocks’ of the Sino-Vatican stalemate, namely the Vatican’s diplomatic ties with Taiwan and the PRC’s ‘self-consecration’ mechanism were all formed in this 9-year period. As we will see in the next chapter of this thesis, even to this day, the pattern of interaction between Beijing and Rome was not fundamentally different from what it was in the 1950s – it is indeed a long-standing stalemate. Hence, understanding how this stalemate was formed in the 1950s will certainly help us better understand today’s Sino-Vatican relations. In this regard, the interactions between Beijing and Rome in the 1950s are not merely historical facts, but part of the two states’ experience that still exerts a great influence on their relationships today.

Secondly, the year 1958 is an important turning point in Sino-Vatican interactions. Before 1958, Beijing did not have a clear position on the Vatican’s role regarding the church in China. Despite the quarrels and the contests between Beijing and Rome, before 1958 Beijing had never formally ordered that the Vatican should be excluded from having any say in the appointment of bishops. In 1958, the officially-sanctioned church passed a

formal resolution which openly rejected the Pope's authority for appointing bishops in China. With Beijing's active support, the officially-sanctioned church 'self-elected and self-consecrated' the first batch of bishops without papal consent. This set a precedent for subsequent episcopal consecrations in China and its mechanism precluded the participation of the Vatican. Therefore, after the 1958 'self-consecrations', Beijing formally excluded the Vatican from the episcopal appointing mechanism. The strong antagonism caused by this event interrupted direct interactions between Beijing and Rome.

Thirdly, the year 1958 saw major political changes in both Beijing and Rome. In 1958, Mao Zedong launched the Great Leap Forward and China started to sink into political turmoil. China was plagued by devastating political movements and became isolated from the rest of the world. Due to the isolation and harsh political environment, contact between Rome and the church in China was lost. On the other hand, the year 1958 was also a turning point for the Vatican because Pope Pius XII died in that year. Successive Popes showed to some extent a more benign attitude towards Beijing. But the Vatican's attempt to reach China in the next two decades met with almost no response from Beijing. Therefore, due to the lack of interaction between Beijing and Rome in the following two decades, the year 1958 is a good cut-off point for research focused on interaction.

The Sources

The main Chinese language sources this research used are collected from the Archive of the Bureau of Religious Affairs, Hunan Province. In the autumn of 2013, I managed to make contact with the Bureau of Religious Affairs, Hunan Province. I discussed my research aims and needs with the officials of the bureau and asked for their help. To my delight, the officials in the bureau were willing to support this research and allowed me to consult historical documents in their archive. At that time, this archive had not yet

been opened to researchers on this topic so I really cherished this chance and intended to make full use of it. In December 2013, I went to Changsha, the capital of Hunan Province and visited the Hunan Provincial Archive. (The Archive of the Bureau of Religious Affairs is a sub-branch of the Provincial Archive). With permission from the bureau, I entered the archive reading room and started to consult historical documents. In the course of three weeks I went to the reading room every working day to research relevant materials.

The Archive of the Religious Bureau holds a huge amount of original internal documents from the 1950s and the early 1980s. As the bureau ceased to function during the long political turmoil of China, the archive lacks records from the mid-1960s to 1979. These documents are faithful records of the Chinese government's religious policies towards the five officially recognized religions of China (Buddhism, Taoism, Islam, Protestant Christianity and Catholicism) in the 1950s and early 1980s. Originally intended for the internal use of bureau officials, these documents are declassified now but are not open to the general public. Despite being a provincial archive, most of these documents were issued by the central government in Beijing and therefore represent national policies. On the other hand, the archive also contains many reports sent by provincial officials to central government regarding the local situation of religions.

During my stay in the reading room I focused my energy on locating the historical documents related to the Catholic Church. The consulting process is far from easy because the index system of the archive was only rudimentary. (Sometimes I had to locate documents about the Catholic Church among large numbers of documents related to Buddhism and Taoism.) However, the most daunting aspect of data collection was that cameras and photocopiers were strictly forbidden in the reading room – so how to faithfully transcribe these documents became a major challenge. Fortunately, the staff of the archive allowed me to use a digital voice

recorder in the reading room. This greatly facilitated the data collection process: whenever I found a valuable document I would ‘whisper’ the original text word by word to the voice recorder. In this way I ensured that I got hold of original material as much as possible in the absence of other transcribing methods. Later on I would listen to these digital recordings and re-transcribe them into texts. During the recording I made a huge effort to make sure that I pronounced every word clearly (despite speaking in a ‘whispering’ tone) so I am confident that this transcribing process has not affected the faithfulness of the sources.

The data collection was very productive and I managed to record a fair number of key documents related to Sino-Vatican relations and the Chinese government’s policies towards the church in China. The majority of these documents have never been released before and therefore can be considered a major contribution to the study of Sino-Vatican relations – to my knowledge, no previous works in English on this topic have ever used this amount and quality of internal archival material from the side of the PRC. These first-hand materials will also benefit further research on church history in China and on the development of the Chinese government’s religious policy in general. My current thesis is based on archival material dated from 1950 to 1958 and I plan to publish further studies on Sino-Vatican relations using the material of other historical periods.

4. A Fundamental Rift (1949-1951)

In this chapter I shall discuss the first two years of Beijing-Rome interaction. As has been discussed in the methodology part, this thesis does not intend to be a comprehensive historical study of Sino-Vatican relations. Instead, it will focus on the ‘flashpoints’ in Beijing-Rome interactions. Hence, what

should be considered as the first flashpoint in Sino-Vatican relations after the foundation of the PRC? Indeed, we are inevitably led to the beginning of Beijing-Rome interactions in the earliest days of the People's Republic. Within two years of the PRC's foundation, Sino-Vatican relations deteriorated rapidly and the Vatican's internuncio to China was humiliated and expelled from mainland China. I argue that the expulsion of the papal internuncio should be regarded as the first flashpoint as this event marks the end of the Holy See's direct diplomatic presence in mainland China.

The expulsion of the papal internuncio was done in a less than friendly way.²²⁰ On 4 Sep 1951, the internuncio, Archbishop Antonio Riberi was summoned to the Public Security Bureau of Nanjing and underwent interrogations. At the end of interrogations, the officials read the expulsion order out to the internuncio and announced that he had offended Chinese law on three issues. First, supporting spying activities; second, organizing counterrevolutionary secret societies; third, inciting Catholics to oppose the government. For these crimes, the internuncio should be 'expelled from the Chinese land forever'. Afterwards, in the late evening of that day, the internuncio was escorted by policemen to his residence to pack his luggage. In the early morning of 5 Sep, the internuncio boarded a southbound train under police surveillance. After a two-day journey, he finally reached the Chinese border at Shenzhen and entered Hong Kong, a British colony at that time – that was the end of the Vatican's direct diplomatic presence in the Chinese mainland.

Why should Beijing treat the Vatican's internuncio in this unfriendly way? In fact, the expulsion of the internuncio was not an isolated event. It was actually the culmination of tension between Beijing and Rome over the previous two years. Hence, in discussing this flashpoint we should not forget

²²⁰ For details of Riberi's expulsion please see: Chen and Jiang, pp.242-243. Mariani, pp.69-71.

that it is closely related to the previous two year's events. So what happened over the previous two years? The previous authors had all noticed that the church had been subjected to pressure on two fronts, namely the loss of church properties and personnel, and the initiation of the 'three-self' ('self-governing, self-preaching and self-funding') movement. The important thing is how to interpret these historical events. In fact, in interpreting this historical period, three tendencies from previous literature are worthy of attention.

First, previous authors tend to hold the view that Beijing's actions towards the church were determined long before the war and that the outbreak of the Korean War simply provided Beijing with a pretext for attacking the church. For example, Myers argues that the Korean War 'made it easier for the authorities to justify squeezing and pressuring the missions through the already-established methods of taxes and confiscations.'²²¹ Another major author, Mariani, also supports the view that 'the war provided the perfect cover for the CCP to effect a more complete cultural transformation of the country, plans that had been drawn up long before.'²²² In other words, Beijing had long decided how to deal with the church in China and the Korean War gave the regime a chance to implement such a decision. No matter how the church behaved, it could not escape from the government's harsh measures. Indeed, as Mariani put it, 'the party had already articulated its long-term policies; the Korean War allowed for an accelerated implementation of these policies.'²²³

Second, the previous account of Beijing's actions towards the church in China is one-sided and only concerns 'how Beijing persecuted the church'.

²²¹ Myers, p. 67.

²²² Mariani, p. 54.

²²³ Ibid., p.54.

The description of these harsh measures was aimed at portraying a highly negative image of Beijing. Soon after the outbreak of the Korean War, Beijing initiated the 'suppression of counter-revolutionaries' campaign to purge perceived domestic threats. In discussion of this campaign, Myers denounces it as 'an open reign of terror' and posits that 'the human toll of this terror can only be estimated but it was surely enormous, probably in the millions.' He further argues that this campaign was conducted below Western standards: 'the Chinese authorities were not operating according to a Western concept of law and legality...anything less than complete enthusiasm for the goals of the revolution, therefore, left one vulnerable to the charge of "counterrevolutionary activity".'²²⁴ Many priests and sisters were arrested in the 'suppression of counterrevolutionaries' campaigns and large numbers of foreign clergy were expelled from China. Mariani also portrayed Beijing's actions towards the church from 1950-1951 as brutal and reckless. The regime not only imposed 'draconian taxes' on the church to render it penniless, but also seized church assets and confiscated schools and charities owned by the church.²²⁵ To be more specific, by taxing the church and cutting off the church's economic ties with the West, Beijing dealt a heavy blow to church finances. The government's interference with the curricula offered by church schools/universities finally led to the nationalisation of these institutions and the church could no longer offer Catholic education in mainland China. Moreover, the church's charity institutions in China were also under attack. The government accused Catholic orphanages of abusing, neglecting and killing large numbers of babies and children. This accusation led to the arrests of many sisters working in orphanages and the confiscation of church charity institutions in

²²⁴ Myers, pp. 84-85.

²²⁵ Mariani, pp. 32-39.

China.²²⁶ To make the situation worse, the church lost a huge number of properties in rural areas due to ongoing Land Reform where the assets of the 'landlord class' were confiscated and divided among poor farmers.²²⁷ In sum, during this historical period, previous literature tends to look only at Beijing's harsh measures against the church and does not discuss whether interaction between Beijing and Rome played any role in it.

Last but not least, previous authors paid too little attention to texts from Beijing's side and regarded them as mere propaganda texts. During this period, Beijing issued many important documents and texts, for example, the PRC's provisional constitution the *Common Program*, key newspaper editorials/articles conveying Beijing's religious policies and the 'declarations' relating to the government-sponsored 'three-self' movement. In fact, the previous authors had noticed the existence of these texts and mentioned them in their works. But they tend to dismiss them as government propaganda texts and did not make any in-depth analysis of them. For example, on 30 Nov 1950, in Sichuan Province, a priest named Wang Liangzuo led several hundred local Catholics and announced the *Manifesto on Independence and Reform*. This manifesto was considered as the start of the 'three-self' movement in the Catholic Church in China. The *Manifesto* was quickly supported and encouraged by the PRC government. Following Father Wang's *Declaration*, the government quickly launched a publicity campaign in various newspapers throughout China. Newspapers published many manifestos signed by local Catholics supporting the 'autonomy movements'. However, both Myers and Mariani argue that these reports were full of slogans of propaganda and therefore likely to have been

²²⁶ Laszlo Ladany, *The Catholic Church in China* (New York: Freedom House, 1987), pp.16-17.

²²⁷ Myers, pp. 62-65.

fabricated by the government.²²⁸ Mariani also points out that ‘many of the signatures on the manifestos were either false or obtained through deception.’²²⁹ After this judgement, both writers quickly switched their attention to narrate how these ‘autonomy movements’ were refuted and boycotted by Chinese Catholics. In other words, even if these documents were mentioned by previous major authors, they are used to portray an ugly image of Beijing. No attempts were made to analyse these texts in detail, let alone to discuss their implications for Sino-Vatican relations.

In sum, the previous works have major flaws in discussing Sino-Vatican relations from 1949 to 1951. I argue these tendencies are not helpful to a better understanding of Sino-Vatican relations because they reflect a rigid view of identity. If we are to be confined by this view, the constructivist process behind Beijing’s change of religious policies will become invisible. Beijing would always be a ‘brutal communist regime’ that continually persecutes the church. The church under communist rule would always be the victim of the regime and could expect no better treatment as long as communist rule persists. Every part of Beijing’s religious policies, no matter how harsh or benign, can be explained by such a supposed ‘communist identity’. But is this explanation really helpful? What kind of role did Rome/the church play during this period? How did this role affect the identity formation process in Sino-Vatican relations? Had the church (and Rome) acted differently, would the result be any different? Previous literature has given us virtually no answer regarding these questions.

The texts to be analysed

In fact, from the latter half of 1950 to the following year, the PRC expressed several times its security concerns about foreign influence on the churches

²²⁸ Myers, pp.69-71. Mariani, pp.55-56.

²²⁹ Mariani, p.56.

in China. To clear the potential threats, the PRC started to encourage the autonomy of the local churches. Faced with these actions of the PRC, the Vatican had also given many speeches and taken a series of measures to secure the ties between the local churches and Rome.

From the side of Beijing, this section will analyse three texts. Firstly, the thesis will examine a newspaper article named *A correct understanding*, which was the first systematic formal declaration of the PRC's attitude and policy towards the church in China. Secondly, the thesis will go on to analyse the PRC's provisional constitution the *Common Program* and discuss its significance for Sino-Vatican relations. Afterwards, attention will be given to the *Manifesto on Independence and Reform*, which marked the PRC's first attempt to promote the 'three-self' movement in the Chinese Catholic Church. From the Vatican's side, besides the papal internuncio's speeches and gestures in China, special attention will be paid to Fr. Matthew Chen's treatise *Holy and Catholic* and the church's anti-Beijing leaflets discovered in the Hunan Provincial Archive. Their effects on identity articulation will be discussed.

4.1 Beijing Speaks out: Three Texts on the Church in China

Prelude: A Benign Period

On Oct 23, 1949, Nanjing, the capital of China at that time, fell into the hands of the CPC. When the leadership of the city changed, most foreign diplomats in Nanjing chose to leave. The embassies were quickly evacuated. Some diplomats retreated to their home countries, while some followed the fleeing KMT government to the city of Guangzhou. Contrary to the reactions of other states to the communist takeover, the Holy See chose to "stay in China" by ordering the Catholic priests and missionaries, including the papal

internuncio, Archbishop Riberi to stay in mainland China. Pope Pius XII, after learning of the communist takeover of Nanjing, immediately took four measures. First, the Pope ordered Catholic foreign bishops and missionaries 'to remain in their posts.'²³⁰ Second, The Pope ordered Cardinal Tien Ken-Sin and Archbishop Yu Pin to return to mainland China.²³¹ Cardinal Tien was the Archbishop of Beijing (Peiping) and Yu was the Archbishop of Nanjing (Nanking). At that time, they were the two most influential archbishops in the Chinese Catholic Church. When Nanjing fell into the communists' hands, Tien and Yu were abroad. The Pope ordered them to return to their dioceses immediately.²³² When the two showed hesitation about returning to mainland China, the Pope was angry.²³³ Third, the Vatican refused to accept the new ambassador from the KMT government despite the fact that the latter was more than eager to return to

²³⁰ Weimin Gu summarised in his *Annals of the Chinese Catholic Church* the Vatican's order to the priests. "Regarding the retreat of the Chinese Catholics, the Vatican had clearly expressed its attitude: First, students from the major seminaries should be relocated to the safe zone (i.e. the areas not directly affected by the Civil War) and continue their studies. Second, students from the minor seminaries should be relocated to the hinterlands of China since it is almost impossible for them to continue their studies. Third, the Pope ordered that all the priests should remain in their posts. Only the ones who are in special danger can retreat." From: Weimin Gu, *Annals of the Chinese Catholic Church* (Shanghai: Shang Hai Shu Dian Publishing House, 2003), p.525.

²³¹ Chen and Jiang, p.227. 'Regarding the situation, Tien Ken-sin is quite typical. He did not return to Beijing despite the fact that Riberi repeatedly ordered him to.' 'Yu Pin may also have received orders from the Vatican, which commanded him to return to China although he had already been accused by the Communists of being a "war criminal".'

²³² The two archbishops never managed to go back to Mainland China, as they were affiliated with the KMT government in Taiwan. The exiled government in Taiwan did not wish them to do so.

²³³ According to Chen and Jiang, Pope Pius XII was extremely unhappy about Tien Ken-sin's lingering presence in Hong Kong. When someone interceded with the Pope on Cardinal Tien's behalf, the Pope harshly criticised Cardinal Tien: "A Cardinal should obey the Pope rather than obey the laity!" From: Chen and Jiang, p.228.

the Vatican.²³⁴ Fourth, The papal internuncio, Antonio Riberi, chose to stay in Nanjing.²³⁵ Despite urging and an invitation from the KMT Government, he refused to move away from Nanjing.

On the other hand, the communists tolerated Riberi's stay in Nanjing and did not try to expel him. Moreover, the activities of internuncio Riberi, and other missionaries remained generally undisturbed. As records demonstrate, Riberi had personal freedom which enabled him to travel to other cities and perform the consecrations of new bishops. His freedom of speech was also undisturbed and he could freely contact and send telegraphs to his peers in China and abroad.²³⁶

In sum, though the PRC and the Vatican were holding '*a priori* conditions' which may tempt them to regard each other as potential enemies, these 'pre-definitions' did not lead them to take hostile action towards one another automatically. Following the fall of the KMT capital in 1949, the Holy See made an important initial decision to stay in mainland China despite the exodus of diplomatic officials from other countries. Although there was no direct contact between the communist government and the Vatican, the Pope's decision to "remain in China", and his cold attitude towards the KMT government, had certainly sent positive and friendly messages to the Communist Party, which was now the rising power. On the other hand, we can see that despite the anti-communist impression of the Vatican, the CPC,

²³⁴ Ibid., p.228. According to Chen and Jiang, the Vatican sent a message to the KMT government: 'As we are now in a delicate condition, the Holy See hopes that the Chinese government can delay the appointment of an ambassador to the Vatican.'

²³⁵ Ibid., p.220.

²³⁶ Mariani, pp.28-29. 'On July 18,1949, Anthony Riberi, the Vatican internuncio to China, wrote to Fernand Lacretelle, the Shanghai Jesuit Mission superior, and told him that the present Shanghai Diocese would be subdivided into two dioceses and two apostolic prefectures.' 'On October 7, 1949, Riberi himself consecrated Kung at St. Ignatius Church in Xujiahui.'

seeing the Vatican's action of staying in China, did not take proactive action to stop it. At least, the CPC allowed Cardinal Riberi to stay in Nanjing, and did not try to limit his personal freedom. Therefore, when revisiting the first several months of the PRC-Vatican encounter, we discover that both parties behaved with restraint. Nobody tried to communicate with each another and at least peace was kept between the two parties. However, such a status quo could not be maintained in the following interactions.

Even writers that are highly critical of the CPC's religious policy did not fail to notice the initial peace between the new regime and the church. Mariani noticed that the normal life of the Catholic Church in Shanghai remained undisturbed after the communists' takeover of Shanghai.²³⁷ He also noticed that the priority of the new regime's education policy was not to eliminate religious influence, but to wipe out KMT influence.²³⁸ Moreover, the schools and universities run by the church could operate as usual. Mariani attributed the initial peaceful situation of Shanghai to two factors: first, the communists were still preparing their security apparatus; second, the CCP 'needed all the friends it could get', which means that the regime did not want to 'antagonize groups that could – at least temporarily – contribute to national stability' before securing its power over China. In other words, Mariani implied that the benign policy adopted by the CCP towards the church was only for reasons of expediency. When Beijing consolidated its power, it would crush the church. Myers also reported the communists' initial benign treatment of Catholics, especially in the 'newly liberated areas'.²³⁹ But he also drew a similar conclusion that the benign policy was only temporary.

²³⁷ Mariani., pp.27-28.

²³⁸ Ibid., pp.34-35.

²³⁹ Myers, pp. 42-43.

Their arguments seem hard to refute. It is true that soon after Beijing established firm control over China, its policy towards the church was quickly tightened to the extent that the church struggled to survive. But this thesis argues that to see Beijing's policies toward the Catholic Church as fulfilling an *a priori* aim of destroying the church is an oversimplification. We will see from the later parts of this thesis that the two core issues of the Sino-Vatican stalemate were formed in a long process of nine years and were closely related to the interactions and feedback between the two countries. For the same reason, we should not regard Beijing's initial benign attitude towards the Catholic Church as mere expediency. It was, in fact, an initial move made by Beijing towards the church and the Vatican, and this move would be adjusted by Beijing according to the church's feedback.

Deducing the initial intention from the result is easy. But in many instances the result was only partly related to, or unrelated to the initial intention. The same reasoning applies to Sino-Vatican relations. Indeed, Beijing adopted harsh measures against the church and the pro-Vatican priests in the 1950s. But these things alone cannot prove that Beijing's initial purpose in the early 1950s was to destroy the Catholic Church by forceful and harsh means. It was true that the new regime of Beijing, ruled by communists, had atheism in its ideology. But this did not warrant powerful state intervention in the Catholic Church. In studying Sino-Vatican relations, more attention should be paid to 'how mutual feedback impacted each country's policies', and, in the study of their relationship in the 1950s, to 'why Beijing changed its initial benign policy towards the Vatican to a harsher version and what kind of role was the Vatican playing in this process?'

Engaging with Christianity: A Correct Understanding

So, what was Beijing's initial expression of its attitude towards the church? In fact, Beijing's policy towards religions, especially towards Christianity, is

openly expressed in a key historical text, namely *A Correct Understanding of the Issues Related to Catholicism and Protestantism*. On 20 Nov. 1950, this article appeared in all the major newspapers in mainland China, which is the first time that the PRC government systematically expressed its attitude towards the Christian (Catholic and Protestant) churches in China. At this time, Beijing had already sent armed forces to the Korean battlefield. Under the pretext of war, the PRC expressed its worries about the possible 'imperialist influence' on the churches in China, made some promises and offered solutions.

As the first detailed, formal expression of Beijing's attitude towards Christianity, the text of *Correct Understanding* certainly deserves a prominent place in the key documents of Sino-Vatican interaction. However, the previous literature on this topic paid hardly any attention to this text and no serious analytical effort was made regarding its original text.

Here, in order to shed light on Beijing's first formal message towards the church, I shall use *Correct Understanding* as the first text to be studied in this thesis. In fact, I intend also to use it to illustrate how I conduct discourse analysis and how the concept of 'chain of equivalence' works in studying the identification process. To put it briefly, this style of analysis involves in-depth reading of the original text and makes extensive use of the concept of 'chain of equivalence'. By arranging the key signifiers into chains of equivalence, I hope to clearly show how the actors were connected to other signifiers and their relative positions in the discourse. By reading the chains of equivalence, readers will easily be able to perceive how different actors were identified and categorised and what the author's self-understanding was in the discourse. Indeed, to my knowledge, this is the most explicit and extensive usage of Laclau and Mouffe's original concept in discourse analysis and I believe the analytical framework established in this thesis will have the potential to be used in future research in social science.

One of the chain of equivalence's greatest advantages is that it can summarise long texts in a concise and succinct way. In fact, this thesis involves the study of many original texts that are too long to be presented in full – in this case chains of equivalence will be a good method to show the readers the information most relevant to this thesis (i.e. identity articulation). However, the use of the chain of equivalence certainly involves some degree of subtraction and omission from the original text. Therefore, how can the researcher ensure that this subtraction does not affect the reliability of the chains of equivalence? Indeed, this could be a hard question to answer. The method of chains of equivalence, just like any other analytical method in social science, could be affected by the researcher's own prejudice and partiality. The decision of 'what should be included and what should be omitted' also depends on the researcher's own interpretation and judgement. Hence, how should one address this potential problem?

The first point I would like to make here is that this thesis, as one following the social constructivist approach, does not claim absolute objectivity. Indeed, the anti-essentialism embedded in social constructivism tends to deny the very existence of 'objectivity'. Nonetheless, the denial of absolute objectivity does not mean that one could interpret texts on his/her whim, let alone distort and freely add meanings to the original text. How should I ensure that my analysis faithfully reflects the original ideas in the texts? To maintain good research quality, the following three principles are followed as my 'code of conduct' in discourse analysis:

1. Before putting forward the chains of equivalence, the reader should be informed of the overall structure and content of the original text. The historical background should be introduced and previous scholarly debates should be presented to the readers.

2. When building chains of equivalence, best efforts should be made to retain the original wording of the text. Paraphrasing will only be adopted when there is little chance of different readings.
3. All elements in a chain of equivalence should have an actual textual basis that can be traced to the original text. In fact, in most cases, when explaining a chain of equivalence, I will give the original sentences/wordings from which the chain is derived.

In the following part I will provide my own full translation of *Correct Understanding* from the original Chinese text and illustrate my entire analysis paragraph by paragraph. I hope to give my readers a clear example of my style of discourse analysis and see its advantages for showing the identification process of both states.

The Text Source, Translation, Summary and First Impressions

No full translation of *Correct Understanding* was given in previous academic literature and therefore this is the first attempt to provide the full text for English readers. In fact, *Correct Understanding* is an ideal piece to illustrate my method of analysis because it was not overly long (around 1600 words after translation) and has enough complexity to show the nuances of my analytical model. The original text was published in *Renmin Ribao* (the People's Daily), the official newspaper of the CPC, on 20 Nov 1950. I retrieved the original Chinese text from the official digital archive (1946-2006) of *Renmin Ribao*²⁴⁰ and translated it into English. To be faithful to the original text, I retained the original paragraphing and followed the Chinese

²⁴⁰ Renmin Ribao, 'A Correct Understanding of the Issues Related to Catholicism and Protestantism', *Renmin Ribao*, Page 3, 20 Nov 1950
<<http://58.68.146.102/rmrb/19501120/3>> [accessed 17 Sep 2016].

sentence order and way of expression when possible. The word count after translation was 1670.

After a first reading of the text, the first step of my analysis was to get a general sense of its structure, summarise the main content of the text and list the central issues it contained. In the case of *Correct Understanding*, the original text has a clear, three-part structure, which can be summarised below:

Summary of the structure and main content of *Correct Understanding*

1. The situation of Catholicism and Protestantism in China.

The religious issues should be handled correctly. A dichotomy exists in Christian religions in China: on the one hand, they are the belief systems of the people; on the other hand, they are utilised by imperialists to invade China. There are large numbers of foreign missionaries in Christian churches and the charities and schools owned by the church are heavily funded by the West.

2. The Marxists' attitude towards religions

Marxists are atheists. However, religious issues should be solved by administrative orders and other simplified, radical methods. Although Marxists do not agree with believers of religions, the two groups can form a united front in the face of imperialist threats. Church affairs should be free from imperialist influence and be fully managed by the Chinese people.

3. Some specific issues for Catholicism and Protestantism

Believers should not proselytise outside church buildings while other people should not promote anti-religious views inside church buildings. During land reform church activities should be suspended until land allocation is completed. Schools and other charities can continue to exist as long as they obey the *Common Program*. The government should not occupy church

properties by force. Instead negotiation should be carried out between the government and the church.

After getting the general gist of the text content, I would attempt to figure out what my analytical focus should be. My principal research aim in this thesis is to find out the identity articulation process in their discourses of Beijing and Rome. This process was represented by the defining/identifying efforts made by each side, and when both Beijing and Rome attempt to realise hegemony in fixing the meaning of key signifiers. However, not every signifier in the discourse is relevant to identity building. In studying the discourses between Beijing and Rome, I have to locate the key signifiers in the text and focus on those that are most related to identification process. Indeed, at this early analytical stage, I have already obtained a preliminary impression of what kind of signifiers I should pay attention to. Namely, extra analytical attention should be paid to the signifiers related to 'the government', 'the religious believers', 'the imperialists'. This assumption is based on my knowledge of the background of the original text. As important guidance on religious policy issued in the CPC's official newspaper, it would certainly contain Beijing's self-identification as the government of the newly born PRC. Secondly, as a document intended to be read by readers nationwide, it will certainly touch upon Beijing's understanding of religious believers in China. Lastly, at the time of issue, Beijing was at war with the West on the Korean Peninsula so it can be expected that the threat from 'the imperialists' would certainly be one of the central issues. Therefore, I shall pay special attention to how the author of *Correct Understanding* uses signifiers to represent these political actors and the relationship between these actors. However, readers should notice that the above reasoning should be regarded as a 'warm-up' before the actual analysis of the text. After 'diving into' the original text we shall find many pieces of new information that may compel us to revise our preliminary guess about the nodal points/key signifiers.

Textual Analysis

Now I shall start to analyse *Correct Understanding* paragraph by paragraph.
Here is the title and opening paragraph of the original text:

Editorial:

A Correct Understanding

of the Issues

Related to Catholicism and Protestantism

(20 Nov 1950, Page 3, Renmin Ribao)

1. The general situation of Catholicism and Protestantism in China

In China, the issues related to **Catholicism and Protestantism**, are on the one hand religious issues, namely the belief issues of the people occurred in a certain social condition; on the other hand, these issues are related to the fact that **Imperialism** is utilising religions as tools to invade the Chinese People. We should fully grasp both sides of this issue; know the connections and differences between the two sides and deal with the religious issue correctly according to the policy of **the Central People's Government**.

When I started to read chapter 1, my attention was drawn to the main actors who appear in this paragraph. As in the opening paragraph, the actors mentioned here tend to be the most crucial ones. Therefore, I have marked the signifiers related to these actors in bold. Here we can see three actors, namely 'Catholicism and Protestantism', 'Imperialism', 'the Central People's Government'. Some attention should be paid to the pronoun 'we' – to whom does it refer?

The answer could be a little tricky because from this paragraph alone we could not be entirely sure about the exact meaning of the pronoun 'we'. When mentioning the actors, the author also linked them with some actions. For example, the actor 'imperialism' was connected with the action 'utilising religion to invade the Chinese People'. The pronoun 'we' was linked with the obligation to 'fully grasp both sides of this issue'. I use underlining to mark out the actions that are directly connected to the actors in the text. The relationship between these different actors and their connections with different kind of signifiers will become clearer in the analysis of the following paragraphs.

Catholicism and Protestantism had first entered China long time ago, but their rapid development came after the Opium War. After the Opium War, because of the fact that a large number of **foreign missionaries** came to China, the influence of **Catholicism and Protestantism** has gradually expanded in China. From the very start, the activities of the **two religions** were closely related to **imperialism's** invasion of China. **Both religions** own many churches, schools, hospitals and other cultural and charity institutions. Most of these institutions receive foreign funds and have **foreign missionaries** as de facto leaders. Hence, it is easy for **imperialism** to influence and control the activities of the church. Some church organisations are used by **imperialism** as organs for spying.

This paragraph examines the history and the current situation at the time of the two Christian churches. In fact, *Correct Understanding* does not make much differentiation between Catholicism and Protestantism and frequently uses 'both religions' to denote them. Hence, the signifier 'Catholicism and Protestantism' and 'religions' are equivalent in this text. (Catholicism and Protestantism = the two religions = both religions).

It should be noticed that a new actor, 'foreign missionaries', appears in the text. This actor has a close relationship with 'imperialism' and 'the two religions'. First, foreign missionaries contributed to the rapid development of the two religions after the Opium War. It should be noticed here that the

signifier 'Opium War' has special significance in the PRC official discourse – it was regarded as the beginning of a century-long humiliation of China under Western colonialism. Second, foreign missionaries are *de facto* leaders of church-owned institutions and make the church vulnerable to imperialist influence. Hence, the following chain of equivalence regarding 'foreign missionaries' can be formed:

Foreign missionaries = the ones who expanded the church rapidly = coming after the Opium War = leaders of church schools and institutions

Similarly, another chain of equivalence, 'both religions', can also be derived from this paragraph. I use bracket to denote the use of paraphrasing:

Both religions = related to Imperialist invasion = owning many assets = receiving foreign funds = (having) foreign missionaries as leaders = (vulnerable to imperialist influence)

Besides 'missionaries' and 'both religions', there is another important actor in the paragraph, which is 'imperialists', however, the chain of equivalence related to it needs to be constructed using the information from the next paragraph.

According to statistics, among the **Catholic clergy** (i.e. the fathers and friars who depend on religion for their living), almost half are **foreigners** (5500 out of 12,000 persons); Among the **Protestant clergy**, there are 17% **foreigners** (1700 out of 10,000). In both religions **the UK and the US** denominations are predominant but in recent years the influence of US denominations has already surpassed that of UK ones. After the liberation, the **imperialist influence** in both religions underwent a heavy blow and many **patriotic Chinese believers** have gradually understood **imperialism's** conspiracy of using the churches to invade China. Nonetheless, the **imperialists** do not want to retreat. Even up to now, **they** are still keeping large numbers of foreign clergymen in the churches of both religions and possess power through economic means and from their assets. **They** struggle to retain the imperialist influence in the church and their *de facto* leadership while sowing dissension among believers and continuing their anti-revolutionary

propaganda and spying. Concerning these activities, the **patriotic people of China** must raise their alertness and deal heavy blows to them.

This paragraph examines the composition of the two religions' clergy. It continues to discuss the foreign missionaries' significance in the Chinese churches. Therefore, according to the new information conveyed in this paragraph, the chain of equivalence 'foreign missionaries' can be expanded:

Foreign missionaries = the majority of clergymen in Chinese churches = mostly belong to denominations from the UK or USA.

Apart from information about foreign missionaries, this paragraph also informs us of the actions taken by the 'imperialists'. As the major 'villain' in this text, now we have already obtained enough information to form a chain of equivalence:

Imperialists = received a heavy blow but do not want to retreat = using the church to invade China = keeping missionaries in the church = *de facto* leadership in the church = sowing dissension = engaging in anti-revolutionary activities

From this chain of equivalence, we can see the imperialists' image in the PRC discourse, which is largely hostile, subversive and damaging towards the new regime. *Correct Understanding* uses 'they' to denote the imperialists and points out that they were attempting to use the church in China to sabotage Beijing's rule. However, it is worth asking: what is the relationship between 'imperialists' and 'missionaries'? Are they the same?

In fact, attention should be given to the signifier 'leadership' – if we look back at the chain of equivalence for 'missionaries', we will notice that it specified that foreign missionaries are *de facto* leaders in the Chinese churches. Hence, here the nodal points 'missionaries' and 'imperialists' are connected to the same signifier, 'leadership'. The author of *Correct Understanding* was

implying that both the missionaries and imperialists did the same thing: occupying leadership positions in the Chinese churches. However, being connected to the same signifier does not necessarily mean that ‘imperialists’ and ‘foreign missionaries’ are the same thing. We should continue our reading and analysis to clarify their exact relationship.

Catholicism and Protestantism have converted many among **the Chinese people**. According to statistics, there are 3 million Catholics in China and 80% of them are in rural areas. There are 700 thousand Protestants and 70% of them are in rural areas. **Protestantism** has some outreach organisations such as the YMCA and YWCA in cities. Among believers there are 50% women. The reason why **these people** believe in **religions** is that they lived a miserable life under the burden of the systems of the old society and their political awareness was not properly enlightened. Hence, they wanted to seek comfort in religious belief. After the liberation, especially in the areas where the Land Reform had been completed, the influence of **religions** had already waned due to the raised awareness of workers and farmers. However, **religions** will continue to exert influence and power for a considerably long historical period.

This paragraph starts to discuss the relationship between Christianity and ‘the Chinese People’. The author points out that many of the Chinese people have become Christians and most of them were living in rural areas. (Though more efforts were made to expand the church’s influence in the cities.) The author then draws a conclusion that the reason for their belief was that they suffered under KMT rule and therefore wished to seek comfort in religion. In saying this, it could be argued that the author of *Correct Understanding* showed a subtle sense of superiority and was confident that religion’s influence would reduce when the standard of living improves. Furthermore, the author argues that when awareness was raised among ‘workers and farmers’, the influence of religions will see further decreases. Hence, from this paragraph, we can see the image of typical Christian ‘believers’ in the PRC official discourse, namely:

Believers = among the Chinese People = lived a miserable life = (mainly) workers and farmers

Because of the victory of the People's Revolution and the rise in anti-imperialist sentiment, the patriotic movements appear also among **Chinese Protestants**. Recently, people like Wu Yaozong have issued a manifesto named *Chinese Protestants and their Way to Contribute to the Development of New China*. This manifesto appeals to **churches** to move away from imperialist influences and economic relationships and implement self-governing, self-funding and self-propagating methods. It has already been signed by six thousand **believers** and the signing movement is now expanding. The National Christian Council of China has already expressed their support for this manifesto in their 14th annual meeting in Shanghai, on 18 Oct. A reform movement of progressive significance has already begun in the **Chinese Protestant Church**. **We** should pay attention to this movement and give it appropriate help by its side. This is an important task regarding the policy towards the church.

After drawing the typical image of Chinese Christians, the author of *Correct Understanding* went on to examine the recent 'patriotic movement' among Chinese Protestants. The author mentioned Wu Yaozong, a pro-government church leader who initiated the 'three-self' movement in the Chinese Protestant churches. This movement aimed at cutting off the church's ties with the West and was actively supported by Beijing. The author here pointed out that more and more believers had already become supporters of this movement and called for more help for it. It is worth noticing how the author defined the 'three-self' movement there, namely that it was 'a reform movement'. Furthermore, attention should be given to the pronoun 'we' in the penultimate sentence of the paragraph. If we read it in the context of this text it is not hard to discern that this 'we' refers to those who implement the government's religious policies (i.e. the officials dealing with religions). Hence, the following chain of equivalence could be formed:

Patriotic movement = reform movement = found among Protestants = moving away from imperialism = self-governing, self-funding and self-propagating = (should be supported by 'us')

The latter part of this chain of equivalence ('moving away from imperialism' and 'self-governing') was the aim of Beijing in promoting the 'three-self' movement in the churches. However, this chain of equivalence also had a hidden effect, which may not have been intended by Beijing in the first place: the fact that this movement was first initiated by Protestants may not sound very pleasant to a Catholic reader. To be more specific, in *Correct Understanding*, the author defined the 'patriotic movement' as 'a reform movement with progressive significance'. However, the wording 'reform' could make a Catholic reader think of the Reformation several centuries ago – is Beijing going to initiate another Reformation in the Chinese Catholic Church? The signifier 'reform' would sound very suspicious to Chinese Catholics and the Vatican because it may lead to schism. Here we would see how the vagueness of the text would affect understanding: Beijing was addressing both Catholicism and Protestantism in *Correct Understanding* and used the undifferentiated signifier 'both religions' to denote them. However, treating the two branches of Christianity as the same would have a negative influence on Beijing's Catholic policy – the word 'reformation' may be acceptable to the Protestants, but not to Catholics. Such undifferentiated use of the signifier 'reform' would cause difficulties in Beijing's interaction with the Catholic Church and the Vatican.

2. The attitude and guiding principles of Marxists towards religions

Marxists are absolute **atheists**. However, regarding religious issues that have popular characteristics, **Marxists** always consider them to be social issues that are determined by historical circumstances. **Lenin** said: 'We should explain from a materialist perspective why religious beliefs are still popular among the people.' (This quote comes from *The Attitude of the Workers' Party to Religion*) Therefore, **Marxists** always oppose the wrong opinion and wrong actions which rely on administrative orders and other oversimplified and hasty methods to solve religious issues.

In the text of *Correct Understanding*, this paragraph contains more Marxist-Leninist message than any other parts in that it openly defines the state ideology as 'Marxist' and 'atheist'. Although the text does not specify 'who the Marxists are', from the context we can easily discern that it refers to the ones who led the regime in Beijing, namely the CPC. It should be noticed that every sentence of this paragraph carries at least one signifier related to communism, namely 'Marxist' 'atheist' and 'Materialist'. Such distribution of 'communist' signifiers may give a Catholic reader a strong first impression of anti-religion. The mentioning of Lenin and the concept of 'materialism' may further strengthen this first impression. In other words, at the first glance, the equivalence constructed by this paragraph is like this:

(The government) = Marxists = atheists = Lenin(ists) = materialists

Indeed, many of its meanings are hidden in the quote from Vladimir Lenin. It should be noted that when the author quoted a sentence from Lenin's work *The Attitude of the Worker's Party to Religion*, s/he created intertextuality, a concept widely used in discourse analysis to denote the situation where one text derives its meaning from other pre-existing texts. Therefore, in this paragraph, *Correct Understanding* draws meaning from Lenin's work *The Attitude*. So what did Lenin try to convey by saying this? Let us see the original paragraph from *The Attitude* where the quotation is located:

*Marxism is materialism. As such, it is as relentlessly hostile to religion as was the materialism of the eighteenth-century Encyclopaedists or the materialism of Feuerbach. This is beyond doubt. ...We must combat religion—that is the ABC of all materialism, and consequently of Marxism. But Marxism is not a materialism which has stopped at the ABC. Marxism goes further. It says: We must know how to combat religion, and in order to do so **we must explain the source of faith and religion among the masses in a materialist way.** The combating of religion cannot be confined to abstract ideological preaching, and it must not be reduced to such preaching. It must be linked up with the concrete practice of the class movement, which aims at eliminating the social roots of religion. The deepest*

*root of religion today is the socially downtrodden condition of the working masses and their apparently complete helplessness in face of the blind forces of capitalism, which every day and every hour inflicts upon ordinary working people the most horrible suffering and the most savage torment, a thousand times more severe than those inflicted by extra-ordinary events, such as wars, earthquakes, etc. "Fear made the gods." ... No educational book can eradicate religion from the minds of masses who are crushed by capitalist hard labour, and who are at the mercy of the blind destructive forces of capitalism, until those masses themselves learn to fight this root of religion, fight the rule of capital in all its forms, in a united, organised, planned and conscious way.*²⁴¹

The sentence in bold is the one quoted by *Correct Understanding*. (The wording of this sentence is different from that in *Correct Understanding* because my own translation was based on the original Chinese document). It is not hard to discern how similar the paragraph in *Correct Understanding* is to Lenin's work. Indeed, the author of *Correct Understanding* imitated the 'move structure' in Lenin's work. Both authors defined the 'atheist' nature of Marxists at the beginning of the paragraph and pointed out that religion has no place in Marxist ideology; both argued that belief in religion was determined by social/historical circumstance and both offered their solutions to the religious issues.

However, compared with *Correct Understanding*, Lenin's work is far more explicit in articulating the communist goal in religious policy. First, Lenin clearly pointed out that Marxism was the sworn enemy of religion and the battle against religion was an indispensable part of it. Second, Lenin argued that 'the forces of capitalism' were the root of religious belief and to make religion disappear, its capitalist root must be eradicated. Third, such eradication, as Lenin put it, could not be done by 'ideological preaching'

²⁴¹ Vladimir Lenin, 'The Attitude of the Workers' Party to Religion', *Proletary*, No. 45, 13 May 1909, in *Lenin Internet Archive* <<https://www.marxists.org/archive/lenin/works/1909/may/13.htm>> [accessed 14 Sep 2016].

alone – in other words, one could not beat religion's influence simply by anti-religious propaganda. By contrast, in *Correct Understanding*, Lenin's communist goals became less visible: the author of *Correct Understanding* pointed out that religious issues were 'determined by social circumstances' but did not specify what kind of social condition it was.

In quoting Lenin, the author of *Correct Understanding* simply suggested that readers should take a materialist perspective but did not make the aim of taking such a stance clear. Moreover, unlike Lenin, the author of *Correct Understanding* refrained from using words that sound aggressive towards religion, for example 'relentless', 'hostile', 'combat', 'eradicate'. Last but not least, when explaining Beijing's general policy towards religion, the author of *Correct Understanding* simply said that relying on administrative orders and oversimplified measures is 'wrong' – this is an expression far more restrained than Lenin's counterpart. In sum, even though the author of *Correct Understanding* was modelling their writing on Lenin's work, Lenin's stance towards religion was somehow watered down and softened. What was the reason behind it? We need to continue our reading to find more clues.

The patriotic people of China do not consider Catholicism and Protestantism as religions that should be banned. They only oppose that imperialism should utilise their churches to invade (China). In the battlefield of thoughts, **materialists** could not, and should not mix with believers of religions; however, in the political actions of defending the motherland, developing the motherland, opposing invasion and striving for peace, the materialist and the believers of religions can, and should unite together. Chairman Mao said in his *On New Democracy*: 'The **communists** can build anti-imperialist and anti-feudalist united front with some **idealists** and even religious **believers** in political actions, but **they** should not agree with **their** idealism and religious creeds.' Therefore, all the Chinese **patriotic people** (including **patriotic believers**) should use this principle to deal with **Catholicism** and **Protestantism**: protect religious freedom. However, in all religions, the imperialist influence should be cleared. Instead, patriotism should

be promoted and **Catholicism and Protestantism** should be free from foreign interference and become the Chinese People's own social activities.

After the reference to Lenin's work, the author of *Correct Understanding* drew the reader's attention back to 'patriotism'. At the beginning of the paragraph, the author spoke on behalf of 'the patriotic people' and clearly announced that Christianity should not be banned in China. Then the author voiced the 'patriotic people's' concern, namely that the church could be utilised by the West to 'invade China'. It should be noticed that the author used the word 'only', which conveyed a message that Beijing's sole concern about Christianity was its potential to be used by the West. Here, 'to invade China' means 'to infringe on Beijing's rule over China'. If we pay attention to the signifier 'patriotic people', we will discover the following chain of equivalence:

Patriotic people of China = (tolerating) Protestant/Catholic churches = protecting religious freedom = cleansing imperialist influence = turning churches into the Chinese People's own social activities

The author then used the dialectical method to view the relationship between the ruling communists and the Christians, namely the communists should not follow the 'idealism' of Christianity while the two groups should unite against the perceived military threat from the West. The author then quoted from Mao Zedong's work to support this view of dichotomy. The quote was from Mao's treatise *On New Democracy*, published in 1940 during the Sino-Japanese War. It would be helpful to have a look at Mao's original text. *On New Democracy* was a long article written by Mao articulating the vision of the CPC in all aspects of nation-building (i.e. building a 'New Democracy', in Mao's own words). The quotation is from chapter 15 of the treatise, entitled 'The national, scientific, people's culture', in which Mao expressed the CPC's goal in creating a national culture. Two of Mao's main viewpoints in this chapter are especially relevant. First, the

culture of 'New Democracy' should be indigenized and this indigenization also applies to Marxism.

'(We) must completely and appropriately unify the universal truth of Marxism and the specific experience of the Chinese revolution. In other words, (Marxism) would only become useful after its combination with the characteristics of our nation and its taking of a certain national form. (We) must not apply it subjectively like a formula. Those who treat Marxism like a formula are only joking with Marxism and the Chinese Revolution. There should be no position for them among the revolutionary ranks of China.'²⁴²

From this we can clearly see that Mao advocated a localised version of Marxism in China. Hence, in the CPC discourse, the signifier 'Marxism' actually refers to its indigenised version in China, interpreted by Mao. So what would be its implications for the CPC's religious policy? Mao continued to discuss religion's position in the CPC's vision:

'... The scientific thought of the Chinese Proletariat can form a united front with the materialists and natural scientists among the progressive bourgeoisie of China. However, (it) should not build a united front with any reactionary idealism. **The communists can build an anti-imperialist and anti-feudalist united front with some idealists and even religious believers in political actions, but they should not agree with their idealism and religious creeds.**'²⁴³

Here we can see the original sentence quoted by *Correct Understanding*. In its original context, Mao defined the CPC's relationship with religion (idealism) from two aspects, namely from the 'thought front' and in political actions. Despite the fact that the communists did not agree with religious believers in the first aspect, they can cooperate in defending China from the

²⁴² My own translation from the original Chinese text. From: Zedong Mao, *On New Democracy* (1940) <<https://www.marxists.org/chinese/maozedong/marxist.org-chinese-mao-194001.htm>> [accessed 14 Sep 2016]

²⁴³ Ibid.

perceived Western threat. Here we can see how the indigenization of Marxism advocated by Mao affects the CPC's policing. Different from Lenin, when explaining the party's religious policy, the CPC's focus was not on eradicating the 'capitalist root' of religion, but on how to unite religion against the threat from the West despite the huge difference between state ideology and religious self-understanding. *Correct Understanding* reaffirmed such a stance by creating a reference to Mao's work.

Every **patriotic Catholic and Protestant** should stand with **the Chinese People** and uncover the **imperialist** conspiracy of using **religions** to perform spying activities. They should oppose the **reactionaries** in churches that still collaborate with imperialism; (they should) realise the church's self-governing, self-funding and self-propagating (actions) step by step while gradually moving away from imperialism's influence and economic ties, (thus) turning the church into the Chinese believers' own enterprise. Regarding the **spying elements** in the church who engage in sabotage and espionage, no matter whether they are **foreigners** or Chinese, **the People's Government** shall certainly punish them according to article 7 of the *Common Program*. In this regard, **we** should certainly distinguish between the counter-revolutionary activities of the imperialist elements and the religious issues; and between the spying elements within the church and the entire church (including its buildings and institutions). (These things) should not be mixed up. The **believers** should also be clear about these two issues, lest they should be deceived by the imperialists' subversive propaganda and mistake the **People's Government's** suppression of counterrevolutionary activities as cracking down upon religious activities. (In fact,) **The People's government's** suppression of anti-revolutionary activities is determined by the interests of **the Chinese People** — these measures have nothing to do with religious issues and every **patriotic believer** should actively support them in their own initiatives.

This last paragraph of chapter 2 provided a detailed guideline for applying Beijing's policy towards the Christian churches. The paragraph continues to add meanings to the definition of 'patriotic movement':

Patriotic Christians = standing with the Chinese People = uncovering imperialist conspiracy = realising the 'three-self' movement = supporting the government's effort to suppress counterrevolutionary activities and espionage

The People's government = punishing spying elements = distinguishing religious activities

3. Some specific issues of Catholicism and Protestantism

Regarding **the two religions**, there are several specific issues that should be dealt with properly. First, the proselytising issue. Article 5 of the *Common Program* stipulated that the people have religious freedom. Hence the **government** certainly protects such freedom whilst naturally it does not limit the people's freedom of not believing in or opposing religion. However, when religions' publicity campaigns and their anti-religious counterparts become popular movements, they could affect the peacefulness of social order and provoke unnecessary trouble. For the peaceful social order, the appropriate solution is that the **church** should refrain from proselytising outside church buildings; in the meantime, other organisations and people should not go into church buildings and promote anti-religious thoughts there. Furthermore, according to previous experience, in the areas where Land Reform is ongoing, church activities could affect the order of Land Reform. Hence, before the completion of land allocation, it is appropriate that all activities (including weekly services and bible reading sessions) within and outside church buildings should temporarily stop. For preaching, the **church** can publish books and magazines promoting general religious creeds. However, these publications should not contradict the *Common Program*. There are some church publications which spread rumours slandering the People's Democracy. Regarding such publications, the **government** shall certainly prohibit them and destroy their stocks. The organisations that published these things shall be punished by law.

From this paragraph onwards the author started to deal with specific issues related to the churches in China. The author announced on behalf of the government that the freedom of both believers and atheists will be protected – in order to avoid 'unnecessary troubles' the proselytising activities should be confined within church buildings. On the other hand, the author pointed out that anti-government views would not be tolerated in church publications and warned that anyone who published these things would be punished. The following chains of equivalence can be formed:

**The Government = protecting religious freedom (both to believe and not to believe)
= punishing anti-government propaganda**

The church = staying inside the church building = ceasing activities during the Land Reform = refraining from anti-government propaganda

Second, the issue related to schools, hospitals and other charity institutions owned by the church. Chairman Mao says in his *On the United Government*: 'As long as the religious **believers** obey the government's laws, the **government** shall give them protection. The one who believes and the one who does not believe shall each have their freedom and nobody should compel them or discriminate against them.' Regarding the enterprises owned by the church, the same principle applies. As long as they obey the *Common Program* and the government's laws and orders, the **People's Government** shall treat them as ordinary privately-owned enterprises and take both the state's interest and the private counterpart into account. The schools owned by the church should implement the government's laws and orders together with other schools. The mandatory political modules taught in other schools should also be set up in church schools. Religious courses shall be permitted to be set up in the higher-education institutions as elective modules. The religious students and their non-religious counterparts should not attack each other and disturb the school order. By contrast, they should unite under the principle of 'loving one's country, loving one's school' and oppose together imperialism and spying elements.

The author gave detailed instruction about the government's policy towards schools and charities owned by the church. A reference was made to Mao's work *On the United Government*, an article quite similar to *On New Democracy* in content. Mao's original words in *On United Government* were:

'According to the principle of religious freedom, the Liberated areas of China tolerate the existence of religions. Regardless of Protestantism, Catholicism, Islam, Buddhism and other religions, as long as the religious believers obey the People's government's laws, the government shall give them protection. The one who

believes and the one who does not believe shall each have their freedom and nobody should compel them or discriminate against them.²⁴⁴

Based on this principle, the author of *Correct Understanding* promised that the government would not discriminate against church-owned enterprises. Regarding the schools owned by the church, the author pointed out that they need to implement the government's policy of setting up 'political modules' in their curricula, namely, the government's ideology should also be promoted in schools owned by the church.

Third, property disputes that occurred in some areas should be solved appropriately. As a general guideline, when the **government** wishes to requisition or borrow church buildings, it should negotiate with the church side to solve the problem and should not take them by force. On the side of the **church**, they should also consider the difficulties met by the government and lend vacant rooms to the government. There are certainly many issues of this kind. As a general principle, everything should be carried out according to the government's laws and orders. One should be fair and reasonable (in all these issues), and neither show favour to, nor discriminate against the church.

In the last paragraph of *Correct Understanding*, the author addressed the issue related to church properties. The author called on both local governments and the church to understand each other and was against the practice of seizing church properties by force. On the other hand, the author reminded the reader of the 'current difficulties' of the government and asked the church to lend empty rooms to the government. Hence, based on the last two paragraphs, we can further expand the chain equivalence 'the church':

²⁴⁴ My own translation from the original text of Mao. From: Zedong Mao, *On the United Government* (1945) <<https://www.marxists.org/chinese/maozedong/marxist.org-chinese-mao-19450424.htm>> [accessed 14 Sep 2016]

The church = obeying the government's laws (regarding enterprises) = setting up political modules in schools = understanding the government = lending vacant rooms to the government

It also should be noticed that in this chapter, the author made two references to the *Common Program*, another important document from the side of Beijing whose significance will be touched upon in the next section of this thesis.

What Do We Find in the Chains of Equivalence?

After deriving the chains of equivalence from the analysis of the original text, now it is time for us to have a closer look at them together. In fact, the chains of equivalence derived from *Correct Understanding* can be categorised into four categories. In doing so, I have also given the chains some minor 'trims' and deleted repeated signifiers.

Category 1: Foreign influence

Foreign missionaries = the ones who expanded the church rapidly = coming after the Opium War = leaders of church schools and institutions = the majority of clergymen in Chinese churches = mostly belong to UK/US denominations

Imperialists = received a heavy blow but do not want to retreat = using the church to invade China = keeping missionaries in the church = *de facto* leadership in the church = sowing dissension = engaging in anti-revolutionary activities

The author identified two actors which belong to this category, namely the 'foreign missionaries' and the 'imperialists'. The two actors have a close relationship and the two chains of equivalence have the possibility of merging together because they share the signifier 'leadership in the church'. However, it can be discerned from the wording of *Correct Understanding* that the two actors were still distinguished – when talking about foreign missionaries, the author did not use highly negative words to define them.

In other words, there was no direct suggestion that ‘missionaries are equal to imperialists’ in the original text. By these two chains of equivalence, Beijing was expressing its fear over the West’s influence in Chinese churches. The key point of concern, as shown by these chains, was actually the leadership of foreign missionaries in the church. As long as this leadership was denied, Beijing’s fear would be dissolved and there would be no point in linking foreign missionaries with imperialism.

Category 2: The People’s Government and the Patriotic people of China

The government = Marxists, atheists, materialists = punishing spying elements = protecting religious freedom (both to believe and not to believe) = punishing anti-government propaganda

Patriotic people of China = (tolerating) Protestant/Catholic churches = protecting religious freedom = cleaning imperialist influence = turning churches into the Chinese People’s own social activities

In this category two political actors were named, namely the government and the ‘Patriotic People’. The author identified the government as ‘Marxist’ and ‘materialist’ and imitated the style and logic of Lenin’s work. However, Lenin’s focus on the ‘capitalist root’ of religion and his strong words against religion were omitted in *Correct Understanding*. Hence, for a reader not familiar with Marxism and Leninism, the actual meaning of the quotation from Lenin was quite vague. Indeed, it could be argued that this vagueness was deliberately created by the author. On the one hand, the imitation of Lenin’s move structure will be discernible to the ones familiar with Marxism and consolidate their in-group identity (commonality). On the other hand, the omission of the anti-religious words would make the text less offensive in the eyes of ordinary Christians, who tend not to be familiar with Lenin’s text. Briefly, it was a watered-downed version of ‘Marxism’. In the following paragraphs the author managed to expand this ‘government’ chain of equivalence with signifiers related to anti-imperialism and state security.

The second point should be noticed is that the relationship between the two actors, namely 'the government' and 'the People' is extremely close in the discourse. Actually, if we replace the signifier 'the People' with 'the government', we would discern that there would not be much change in its meaning. This means that the author was deliberately creating an impression that 'the People's Government' and 'the People' share the same objective and tasks. The government of Beijing thus identified itself as the best advocate of 'the People's interest.

Category 3: Christianity in China

Both religions = related to Imperialist invasion = owning many assets = receiving foreign funds = (having) foreign missionaries as leaders = (vulnerable to imperialist influence)

Believers = among the Chinese People = (living) in rural areas = lived a miserable life = (mainly) workers and farmers

The chains in this category reflected the author's impression of the churches in China. It should be noticed that the article does not address the Vatican directly. *Correct Understanding* did not make an extensive definitive effort regarding the nature of Christians. It merely pointed out that the majority of Christians were in rural areas of China. The main reason for their belief is that in the 'old society' (i.e. under KMT rule) they lived a miserable life and needed religion to soothe the pain of living. On the one hand, it could be argued that this evaluation showed a somewhat hidden sense of superiority – Christianity was connected with a miserable life and was regarded as a method of self-comforting. Beijing was confident that the influence of religion would reduce when the people become more 'enlightened' in the new society. On the other hand, it should be noticed that by defining Christians as mainly workers and rural farmers, the CCP was confirming that they are part of 'the People', namely the ones protected by the government. In other words, in this way, Beijing categorised Christians in China as part of the Chinese People and does not regard them as members of 'foreign

organisations'. As we will see later on in this thesis, this categorisation was important in Beijing because as long as Christians were regarded as part of 'the People', the main policy aim would be to persuade them to become supporters of the government instead of denying their existence in China.

Category 4: Patriotic Christians

Patriotic movement = reform movement = appeared in Protestants = moving away from imperialism = self-governing, self-funding and self-propagating = (should be supported by 'us')

Patriotic Christians = standing with the Chinese People = uncovering imperialist conspiracy = realising the 'three-self' movement = supporting the government's effort to suppress counterrevolutionary activities and espionage

The church = staying inside the church building = ceasing activities during the Land Reform = refraining from anti-government propaganda = obeying the government's laws (regarding enterprises) = setting up political modules in schools = understanding the government = lending vacant rooms to the government

The chains in this category reflected the 'ideal church' in Beijing's discourse. By describing an 'ideal church' Beijing hoped to call on Christians to 'stand together with the People of China', namely to show their support of the government under the context of its fighting with the West. In the last chapter, the author offered the church much advice to reassure the government, namely the church should keep a low profile during the mass movements (e.g. Land Reform) and obey Beijing's secular rule. The key point is that Beijing's policy towards religion would not be much different from its policy towards other social organisations. At the end of *Correct Understanding*, the author made many promises on behalf of Beijing. As long as the church could show that it was not a threat towards Beijing's rule, Beijing would leave it space to survive in the new society.

Conclusion

As the first systemic expression of Beijing's policy towards the church, *Correct Understanding* should be understood as Beijing's open statement about its concerns about the potential threat of the Western presence in the churches in China and certainly gives us crucial information about Beijing's initial stance at the beginning of its interaction with Rome. Three aspects of the discourse it conveyed are worthy of attention.

First is the idea of 'thin communism' and 'thick nationalism' conveyed by the text of *Correct Understanding*. At the beginning of the second chapter, the author, as the spokesperson of the government, identified her/himself as Marxist and atheist. However, the text did not make any attempts to indoctrinate its readers about Marxism's judgement of religions. Although the author referred to Lenin's classic work on religion and imitated Lenin's move structure, *Correct Understanding* omitted Lenin's mentioning of 'capitalist roots' and many strong words used by Lenin against religion. Furthermore, the author creates intertextuality with Mao's works on the CPC's vision of China. A reading of these works of Mao will show that they advocated an indigenised version of Marxism in China – this kind of 'Marxism' is different from its Russian counterpart because it focusses more on building an independent China free from the West's interference rather than battling capitalism in China. In *Correct Understanding* we can discern this 'drifting away' from the discourse of orthodox Marxism. After the brief reference to Lenin, the author quickly switched the topic to the threat of 'imperialism' and then called on Christians to support Beijing's 'anti-imperialist' efforts. This shows that Beijing's discourse related to religion is also accompanied by patriotism and nationalism.

Second, the use of the undifferentiated signifier 'two religions' in *Correct Understanding* shows that Beijing did not develop an independent category for Catholicism in its discourse. In other words, Beijing did not have a

tailored plan to deal with the Catholic Church and regarded it as generally the same as Protestant Christianity. In *Correct Understanding* we could not discern any effort to differentiate the Catholic Church from its Protestant counterparts. In calling on Christians to show their patriotism, the author took the ongoing 'three-self' movement in the Protestant churches as an exemplar and asked the readers (which certainly include Catholics) to follow suit. This reflects the possibility that the author of *Correct Understanding* may not have had a profound knowledge of the differences between the two branches of Christianity and simply regarded them as the same. The author's use of the signifier 'reform' also shows that s/he was not familiar with the implication of this word in Catholic discourse. In Beijing's revolutionary discourse, the term 'reform' has very positive connotations and conveys hopes of a new society, but in Catholic discourse, this term certainly leads readers to think of 'the Reformation' that caused the schism in the church. In sum, the lack of differentiation between Protestantism and Catholicism in Beijing's discourse would make the 'three-self' movement suspicious in the eyes of Catholic readers, including the Vatican.

Third, the elements in the chains of equivalence concerning 'religious believers' and 'foreign missionaries' show that Beijing did not regard them as pre-determined 'enemies' at the beginning of their interaction. To be more specific, these two chains of equivalence were connected with mainly descriptive signifiers and do not contain hostile elements (e.g. espionage, invasion), which means that they were far from the image of 'enemies without guns' in Beijing's discourse at that time. However, that does not mean that Beijing did not show any initial impressions towards the two actors. In the chain of equivalence concerning missionaries, the author was implying that their leadership made the church vulnerable to imperialism. In the chain concerning believers, the author was suggesting they are also part of 'the People'. This shows that Beijing had a different understanding of the two actors. Regarding missionaries, Beijing was concerned about their

leadership in the church and worried about its security implications. Regarding believers, Beijing categorised them as part of the people and hoped to make them support the new regime's rule over China. In sum, all these show that Beijing does not hold a pre-determined 'action plan' against missionaries and the church. Although it has some initial impression of missionaries and believers, this does not warrant harsh treatment towards the church. Instead, Beijing's actions and gestures towards the church were affected by subsequent interactions with the church, namely with foreign missionaries, the Vatican and Chinese believers.

Voice of a New Regime: The *Common Program*

After showing all the details of my analytical model in my analysis of *Correct Understanding*, the thesis will proceed to examine a key historical document that bears close relationship to *Correct Understanding*. This document is named the *Common Program of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference*, which acted as the PRC's temporary constitution until 1954. Many clauses of this document touched upon Beijing's concern regarding religion.

Like *Correct Understanding*, the *Common Program* has not received enough scholarly attention from previous studies on Sino-Vatican relations published in the West. Part of the reason for such negligence perhaps lies in the fact that the message conveyed by the *Common Program* does not fit into the popular image of Beijing as a 'persecutor'. One of the major authors on Sino-Vatican relations, Mariani, did notice that the wording in 'the Common Program' was benign, but pointed out that it was ambiguous in many aspects which could be deliberately interpreted in different ways

according to the needs of the Communist Party.²⁴⁵ He gave a brief analysis of the wording of the *Common Program* and argued that the main function of this document was propaganda and ‘to present a benign face to the outside world’.²⁴⁶ In sum, Mariani considered the *Common Program* mere communist propaganda. However, this thesis would ask, is *the Common Program* just a propaganda text? Can it tell us something about Beijing’s policy towards religions at the time of the foundation of the People’s Republic?

In fact, the view of the *Common Program* as outright communist propaganda is oversimplified. Several features of the *Common Program* showed that it was far more than ‘propaganda’. First, even though it was initiated by the Communist Party of China (CPC), the making of the *Common Program* was not monopolized by the communists. Indeed, as its name suggests, the *Common Program* was the product of discussion between the CPC and other ‘democrats’, namely those who sympathized with the CPC’s cause but did not completely adhere to the communists’ ideals.

According to Chen’s historical research, in drafting the *Common Program*, the CPC adopted an inclusive approach towards the ‘democrats’ and intellectuals. The CPC invited many prestigious non-communist party leaders and intellectuals to discuss the *Common Program*, during which the non-communists’ opinions were valued and absorbed into the draft.²⁴⁷ In order to hear the views of the non-communists, the entire consultation lasted about two years (1948-1949) and the text of the *Common Program*

²⁴⁵ Mariani, pp.31-32.

²⁴⁶ Ibid., p.31.

²⁴⁷ Yangyong Chen, ‘A Study on the *Common Program*’ (doctoral thesis, Fudan University, China, 2009), p.27.

had undergone three drafts before its publication.²⁴⁸ Far from the popular belief, the debate between the communists and the ‘democrats’ during the consultation process was intense and the ‘democrats’ often criticized the communists.²⁴⁹ Furthermore, the *Common Program* does not contain many radical goals and statements about communism. Instead, it simply states that ‘the People’s Republic of China is a New Democratic State’ (General Principles, Article 1) and that it will ‘protect the private properties of workers, farmers, petite-bourgeoisie, and national bourgeoisie.’ (General Principles, Article 3).

In sum, both the careful drafting process and the inclusive content of the *Common Program* showed Beijing’s strong desire to rally as many supporters as possible and a genuine wish to cooperate with all kinds of social actors, including religion. Hence, by treating it as a mere propaganda text, Mariani missed many nuances in the unfolding of Sino-Vatican relations. This thesis argues that the *Common Program* is far more informative than a propaganda document. A careful reading of the *Common Program* will reveal the new regime’s initial schedule and concern regarding religions, especially Christianity.

In the following part I will provide an analysis of the *Common Program* following the framework established in the methodology chapter. The first step is to locate the key signifiers relevant to our study.²⁵⁰ According to the main political actors, the content of the *Common Program* could be

²⁴⁸ Ibid., pp. 30 – 62.

²⁴⁹ Ibid., pp.35-37.

²⁵⁰ My analysis is based on the original Chinese text and English translations provided by the Chinese Law online information service run by Peking University. From:

Chinese Political Consultative Conference, *Common Program of the Chinese People’s Political Consultative Conference* (1949)

<<http://www.lawinfochina.com/display.aspx?id=13212&lib=law>> [accessed on 14 Sep 2016].

summarised into three chains of equivalence. Now let us see the first two chains of equivalence:

Chain 1 'Progressive power':

(Progressive Power) = worker, farmer, petit bourgeoisie, national capitalist, other patriots = the owner of the state = (enjoying) many aspects of freedom = participants of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC)

Chain 2 'Regressive Power':

(Regressive power) = KMT reactionaries, imperialists, feudalists, bureaucratic capitalists = those who engage in counter-revolutionary activities = KMT anti-revolutionary war criminals = (consisting of) essential members and ordinary reactionaries

The author of the document made a clear distinction between the allies and the enemies of the new regime, categorising them into two groups: the 'progressive power' and the 'regressive power'. The first was the progressive power — the friends of the new regime, which included many strata of society. To be more specific, the definition of 'friends' was extended to the widest possible extent and they were all invited to the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC), the temporary 'parliament' of the PRC. All these allies were considered as 'owners of the state' and were guaranteed a wide range of freedoms.

It could be argued that the chain 'Progressive Power' is vague by itself, because the main characteristics of these social groups were undefined. We need to see the difference chain 'Regressive Power' to know Beijing's perception of its friends and enemies. So, according to the *Common Program*, who was the enemy? First and foremost, the remaining KMT elements in China were listed as the number one enemy. The reason was simply that, at the time of the *Common Program's* issue, the KMT still held

large swathes of land in Southern China and many holdout bases in the Chinese hinterland.

The second kind of enemies, the imperialists, were used to denote the West's economic, political and cultural influence in China, especially the US presence in China. Indeed, the US was long denounced by the CPC as the biggest backer of the KMT regime. According to the communist publicity campaign at that time, the KMT regime sold many core Chinese interests to the US and allowed the US to invade China economically and culturally. Moreover, the US military presence in China was an eyesore for the communists. Even the American aid and donations to China were regarded by the CPC as a great shame.

The third kind of enemies were the feudalists (landowner class), who were the remnants of the pre-modern social fabric in China. The CPC regarded them as the origin of China's backwardness and its widespread poverty. The fourth kind of foes of the CPC were the bureaucratic capitalists (and alongside them, the compradors). They were different from the national capitalists because they were extremely close to, and made their profit from the KMT regime.

In light of these two chains of equivalence we can discern that the major foes in the CPC's official discourse are: first, the power of the remaining KMT members in China and their sympathizers; second, the Western presence in China. However, what is their potential threat to the new regime? How would they harm the newly born PRC? The answer can be found in the third chain of equivalence, the 'People's Government', which revealed the new regime's hopes, fears and schedules to overcome obstacles.

The Chain 'People's Government':

(tasks) = having the responsibility of finishing the people's liberation war and liberating all the Chinese territories, unifying China = cancelling all the privileges enjoyed by the imperialist countries = confiscating bureaucratic capitals = reforming land ownership and realizing universal ownership of farmlands = protecting the properties of national capitalists = cracking down on counterrevolutionary activities = allying with the Soviet Union and opposing imperialism together =

(in education policy) wiping out the influence of feudalists, compradors and fascists = reforming the old education system, content and pedagogy = giving revolutionary political education to young intellectuals and old-school intellectuals =

(in diplomatic policy) upholding the principle of independence and the integrity of sovereignty = revising, modifying and abolishing different agreements and pacts signed by the KMT regime = recovering and establishing diplomatic relationships on the basis of equal status and mutual benefit = protecting Chinese people overseas = protecting expats in China who obey Chinese laws

Since it is quite a long chain of equivalence, three brackets have been inserted into it to mark its three parts, namely the regime's urgent tasks, education policy and diplomatic policy. This chain of equivalence depicts the regime's clear plan to deal with its friends and foes. The new regime promised many things to its friends: first, their freedom was guaranteed by the *Common Program*; second, their welfare and properties, including those of national capitalists, would be protected and increased under the communist rule; third, the government would provide many types of service to the people. On the other hand, against its enemies, the *Common Program* also meted out measures to clear China of their influence: first, the CPC would carry out the 'war of liberation' to the end and annihilate the KMT strongholds in China; second, 'bureaucratic capitals' would be confiscated by the state; third, landowners' lands in the rural areas would be distributed to peasants via 'land reform'; fourth, the new regime will ally with the Soviet Union to combat the Western 'imperialists'.

In reading the *Common Program* we also need to pay attention to various aspects of the new regime's policies, of which those most related to Sino-Vatican relations are the education policy and the diplomatic policy. The new government's main aim in the education policy was to purge the KMT (who were called 'fascists') influence in school curricula. Moreover, the new policy, 'revolutionary political education', in other words the official ideology, would be administered to students. The 'old-school intellectuals', namely the traditional Confucian literati, would also be subject to this policy.

Now let us see the part of the chain of equivalence related to diplomatic policy. According to the *Common Program*, Beijing's first principle of diplomacy is the maintenance of independence and sovereignty. Based on this principle, Beijing would pursue partnerships of equal status in creating diplomatic ties. At that time, in creating diplomatic ties, the most important criterion for Beijing was whether the country seeking Beijing's friendship had already shunned, or would be willing to shun the KMT regime. Moreover, the new regime also expressed its willingness to protect 'expats in China abiding with Chinese laws'. Briefly, it could be seen from the statements in the *Common Program* that Beijing: (1) was willing to create diplomatic ties with other states, including those from the West, provided that the country was willing to shun the KMT government. (2) These diplomatic ties should provide some benefits instead of obstacles for Beijing. (3) Beijing was willing to allow expats that were friendly to the new regime to stay in China.

Conclusion

Far from being a mere propaganda text, the *Common Program* was a key document conveying Beijing's attitude, desires and fears in all aspects of state governing and certainly merits due scholarly attention. After analysing the text of the *Common Program*, I argue that this document represents the new regime's first attempt to identify its main obstacles and tasks. The domestic political actors were categorised into those who supported Beijing

and those who supported the KMT regime. In the meantime, Beijing identified its principal task as battling the remnants of KMT in China and rebuilding the war-ravaged state. To be more specific, we can discern from the text that the new regime was about to:

(1) put the stress on patriotism, state sovereignty and 'anti-imperialism' (i.e. the expulsion of the West's 'unequal privileges' in China)

(2) redistribute the rural lands to poor peasants

(3) realize the state control of the welfare/charity system and the education system

(4) mete out an iron fist against the KMT and their sympathizers

(5) strive for international recognition (and denial of the KMT's international access)

It should be noticed that in all these policies, the Catholic Church was not the major intended target. (1) The 'imperialists' in the communist discourse mainly referred to the expats from the major Western states. Though the Vatican had many foreign priests in China, not all of them were from the major Western states. (2) The Catholic Church was never the major landowner in the rural areas of China. (3) The Catholic Church was not the sole religious organization that owned charity and education institutions in China. (4) Being a Catholic in China at that time did not mean that someone was also a sympathizer of the KMT regime. In other words, the policies listed in the *Common Program* were not designed especially against the Catholic Church. Among these policies, the one with harshest implications for the church was the state control of educational institutions, which put the church-owned schools and universities potentially at risk. In sum, the *Common Program* only identified the KMT remnants as the major threat. As

long as a social group distanced itself from the KMT, it should have been regarded as the new regime's friend. Hence, we can discern that at the beginning of Beijing-Rome interaction, Beijing did not identify Rome, nor the church, as an 'enemy' in the state discourse. The following enmity between the two sides was not pre-determined, but the result of subsequent interactions.

The First Salvo: The Manifesto on Independence and Reform

As demonstrated by the two documents above, the major concern of the PRC is that the foreign churches may be utilised by 'the imperialists' to threaten the security of the PRC. The way to prevent the imperialists from doing this is to make the church autonomous. Based on this assumption, the PRC government started to push forward the autonomy process of the Christian churches in China. On 30 Nov 1950, in Sichuan Province, a priest named Wang Liangzuo led several hundred local Catholics and announced the *Manifesto on Independence and Reform*. This manifesto was considered as the start of the 'three-self' movement in the Catholic Church in China.

All the previous authors had mentioned this manifesto in their works but few had made any analytical effort into the text. Despite the fact that Myers had included a full English translation²⁵¹ in his book, his aim was only to provide an example of government propaganda. Chen and Jiang also included the manifesto in their book but made only a simple comment on it: 'this manifesto was certainly arranged by the CPC'.²⁵² In other words, the previous authors do not think that this text represented the genuine opinion

²⁵¹ Myers, p.74.

²⁵² Chen and Jiang, p. 239.

of Chinese Catholics and were not willing to spend effort on analysing it. However, I argue that for my research purpose (Beijing-Rome interaction), this *Manifesto* is good material to be analysed as long as it represents Beijing's attitude. In other words, whether this text was genuinely composed by Fr. Wang or not is less important – Beijing's strong endorsement means that it is part of the desired state discourse. In the following part I will provide an analysis of the *Manifesto* and discuss how it mattered in Sino-Vatican relations. My analysis was based on the original Chinese text²⁵³ and the quoted sentences are my own translation.

If we arrange the key signifiers of the *Manifesto* into chains of equivalences, it would appear as below:

Imperialists = using the church to invade China = killing innocent compatriots

New church = relying on herself = cutting off ties with imperialism = supporting the 'resist America, aid Korea' movement = struggle for New China

The *Manifesto on Independence and Reform* is a short article consisting of only several hundred words. The addressee was identified at the very start of the article as "Catholic brothers and sisters in China". The supposed author (Father Wang) bitterly accused the imperialists of abusing the local churches and making the Chinese churches their 'spearhead of invasion'. The *Manifesto* identifies 'American Imperialism' as the major enemy of Chinese Catholics and points out that 'the aim of American Imperialism is to control the local churches in China and turn them into a tool for invading and destroying China'. Following this, the writer introduces the current background to readers. 'The Imperialists ... expanded their warfare to the Chinese north-east border, bombarded the peaceful cities and killed our innocent compatriots.' At last, the writer calls on Chinese Catholics 'to sever

²⁵³ Ibid.

all ties with imperialists, and to extinguish all ‘Pro-American and Americanophile thinking, while establishing our self-governed, self-funded and self-preaching new church.’

In fact, the text of the *Manifesto* shows a strong antithesis between the church controlled by ‘imperialists’ and the ‘new church’. The author identified ‘imperialists’ as brutal killers of the Chinese and drew readers’ attention to the alleged US bombing of cities in North-east China. Based on the atrocities of ‘imperialists’, the author called for the building of a ‘new church’. The signifier ‘New Church’ was actually modelled on the catchphrase ‘New China’, which was widely used in the state discourse to denote the new regime led by the CPC. Regarding the content of this ‘new church’, the manifesto simply specified that this church should unite with the government in an effort to battle ‘imperialists’ in Korea and support the rebuilding of China.

Comment on the *Manifesto on Independence and Reform*

As the ‘first salvo’ in Beijing’s effort to promote the ‘three-self’ movement in the Catholic Church, how should we evaluate the text of the *Manifesto*? Indeed, despite the fact that the text of the *Manifesto* is short and full of slogans and catchphrases, it was a clear expression of Beijing’s attitude towards the Catholic Church in China – the church should not be used by the West to sabotage Beijing’s rule over China and its efforts in the Korean War. In the three texts we have gone through from the side of Beijing, the *Manifesto* is the shortest in length but the strongest in tone. With this text, Beijing drew a red line for the church and Rome. The church needed to clear herself of the suspected ‘imperialist’ accusation and reassure Beijing – to do so, Beijing suggested that the church should take some actions to distance itself from foreign control. Indeed, ‘New Church’ and ‘Reform’ were the initial proposal offered by Beijing: the church should model itself on the communist Party in its struggle to overthrow the KMT’s *Ancien Régime*.

However, as we shall see later, this wording of Beijing's proposal touched a raw nerve for the church because it hinted at another religious 'Reformation' in China creating something new from the original Catholic Church – which was anathema to Catholic discourse. Beijing would later realise that these signifiers would do disservice to the 'three-self' movement.

The *Manifesto* was quickly endorsed and encouraged by the PRC government. The top leaders of the Communist Party made a series of speeches to support the autonomy of Chinese churches from foreign control. With the support of the PRC government, the "autonomy movement" quickly spread into other provinces. Following this, a series of 'Declarations of autonomy' appeared in newspapers nationwide. On 31st March, the movement reached Nanjing, where the papal internuncio was staying. Father Li Weiguang, the vicar general of Nanjing, signed a declaration whose wording is similar to the *Manifesto*. The vicar general's cooperation with Beijing alerted the Vatican and Archbishop Riberi decided to break his silence. This finally led to the expulsion of the papal internuncio – the details of which we will explore in the next section.

4.2 The Church's Replies

Less than a year after Beijing's attempt to promote autonomy in the Catholic Church in China, the papal internuncio was expelled from China. The previous authors usually regarded this as an attack long planned by Beijing. For example, Mariani used the catchphrase 'targeted attack' to describe Beijing's moves.²⁵⁴ In other words, the expulsion of the papal internuncio was pre-determined by Beijing's communist nature: because the regime wanted to take full control of the church, so the papal internuncio became

²⁵⁴ Mariani, p.68.

an obstacle who must be removed. Indeed, this argument seems quite convincing because the attack against the internuncio was done within such a short period of time after the initiation of the 'three-self' movement, something which causes difficulties for a constructivist explanation. Mariani noticed that since June 1951, a huge number of articles appeared in newspapers all over China attacking Archbishop Riberi and denouncing him as an imperialist.²⁵⁵ Regarding this campaign against the internuncio, Mariani commented: 'It was a classic campaign of agitation propaganda: stir up the "masses", and then implement the predetermined strategy.'²⁵⁶ Narrating the same event, Myers also pointed out that the attack on Archbishop Riberi was carried out in a rapid manner and was done in the name of the 'Chinese people'.²⁵⁷ Chen and Jiang highlighted the fact that the media denouncing Riberi were all 'controlled by the CPC'.²⁵⁸ In sum, according to previous authors, the attack on Riberi was pre-determined, fierce and rapid and accompanied by propaganda campaigns launched by the government-controlled media.

Indeed, the expulsion of the papal internuncio presents a difficult case for a constructivist interpretation not only because of the rapid manner on the side of Beijing, but also because of the lack of reports of the Vatican's moves during the unfolding of this event. In other words, the previous literature gives us very little account of the Vatican's gestures towards Beijing around the time of the internuncio's expulsion. There are only several fragments of Archbishop Riberi's speeches mentioned in previous literature. Apart from reports of Beijing's harsh attacks on the internuncio and the Vatican, previous books shed almost no light on the question of 'how Rome acted

²⁵⁵ Ibid., p.69.

²⁵⁶ Ibid.

²⁵⁷ Myers, pp.92-94.

²⁵⁸ Chen and Jiang, p.241.

towards Beijing'. The reason behind this lack of reporting is perhaps twofold: first, the writing aim of the previous literature was to show 'how the church suffered under Beijing's rule', so the report of how Rome acted towards Beijing became unimportant; second, the previous authors may also have met obstacles in obtaining first-hand materials of this historical event, which happened more than 60 years ago. Both factors contributed to the lack of reports about the Vatican's actions towards Beijing from 1950 to 1951.

Following the constructivist approach, I do not agree with the view that the expulsion of the papal internuncio was pre-determined. However, I have faced the same obstacle as the previous authors did in that there are not many first-hand accounts showing the Vatican's moves in China during this period. Hence, in providing a constructivist account of the Beijing-Rome interaction around the time of the internuncio's expulsion, I will try to do three things. First, I shall make an attempt to reconstruct the internuncio's moves and gestures before his expulsion. Second, I will examine the self-understanding of the church at that time and how this would affect the Beijing-Rome relationship. Third, I will make use of newly discovered archival material to show how the church's publicity campaign against Beijing would impact Sino-Vatican relations.

What did the internuncio do in China before the expulsion?

The internuncio Archbishop Riberi's original speeches are hardly mentioned in previous literature. According to Mariani, the internuncio was infuriated by a manifesto supporting the 'three-self' movement published in Chinese newspapers.²⁵⁹ The key issue was that the pro-government manifesto was signed by Fr. Li Weiguang, the vicar general of Nanjing. The manifesto

²⁵⁹ Mariani, p.58.

contains many political slogans, in which the following words relate to the Vatican:

‘...We shall obey the laws issued by the government, embrace the *Common Program*, be diligent in our positions and work hard. We must resolutely exterminate all imperialism’s forces and influence in the Chinese church. In order to reach this aim, we must act proactively and implement the three principles of “self-funding, self-propagating and self-governing”. Apart from keeping purely religious ties with the Vatican in terms of our religious belief, we firmly oppose the Vatican’s interference with China’s internal affairs and resolutely cut off the political and economic ties with it.’ ²⁶⁰

When Riberi read this, he immediately sent a letter to every bishop in China, which said:

‘Today, 31 March, the newspapers in Nanjing carried a manifesto. It is reported that the priests and laity of our local diocese signed it. I am deeply saddened by this and hope to tell you immediately — that the manifesto was issued without my consent and I cannot agree with (what it says).

I offer my fervent prayers to the Holy Spirit and may He grant every layperson and all members of the clergy the necessary wisdom and courage in order that they can know and courageously beat the enemy’s cunning plots, for the honour of our blessed mother church and the pontiff.’ ²⁶¹

All the previous major authors noticed that it was this letter that provoked Beijing and directly led to Riberi’s expulsion. As Mariani put it: ‘Riberi had offended the regime. He had to go.’ ²⁶² Indeed, on 4 Apr 1950, the *Renmin Ribao* published an article denouncing the papal internuncio as a ‘lackey of US imperialism’. Five months later, the internuncio was summoned to the

²⁶⁰ My own translation from the original Chinese text, which is quoted in Chen and Jiang, pp.240-241.

²⁶¹ My own translation from the Chinese text, in Chen and Jiang, p.241.

²⁶² Mariani, p.58.

security bureau and expelled from China. Hence, regarding this event, Riberi's letter to the bishops in China and Beijing's denouncement in *Renmin Ribao* became the only visible Beijing-Rome interactions in the previous literature.

Apart from this denouncement of the 'three-self' movement, several fragments of Archbishop Riberi's speeches during this period can be found in previous literature. In accounts provided by the Chinese side, it was reported that Riberi had sent a letter ²⁶³ to Fr. Wang Liangzuo (the supposed author of the *Manifesto on Independence and Reform*) in Latin, warning him 'do not fall into the trap of the enemy.' Moreover, when addressing the Catholic faithful in Nanjing on 2 Jul 1950, the internuncio hinted that the CPC's rule over China would not last long: 'The situation is different now. The darkness before dawn has already passed. Before the end of this year things will certainly change.'²⁶⁴ Hence, it can be seen from these fragments of speeches that the internuncio expressed no goodwill towards Beijing. However, these fragments themselves are far from sufficient in conveying the role played by Rome during the first year of the CPC's rule over China.

Considering this lack of reporting regarding the internuncio's activities in China during this time, it is not easy to reconstruct Rome's role in the breakdown of Sino-Vatican relations in 1951. However, key documents circulated in the Chinese church at that time can shed light on Rome's agency in its relationship with Beijing. In the following section I shall analyse two things: first, the Chinese church's systematic reply towards Beijing regarding the 'three-self' movement; second, the church's publicity

²⁶³ Lengzi, 'Yesterday's Movement: The start of the Anti-Imperialist Patriotic Movement in Chinese Catholicism', *Zhong Guo Zong Jiao*, 1 (2001) 37-39
<<http://www.cnki.com.cn/Article/CJFDTOTAL-ZGZJ200101011.htm>> [accessed 14 Sep 2016].

²⁶⁴ Chen and Jiang. p.239.

campaign against communism and Beijing. It is hoped that by shedding light on these events we can understand more about how Rome's action affected Chinese Catholics' self-understanding and Sino-Vatican relations overall.

Matthew Chen Zhemín's *the Church: Holy and Catholic*

In fact, despite the lack of detailed reporting of the internuncio's activities and speeches before his expulsion from China, the Vatican's reply to Beijing's expression of religious policy was systematically embodied in a key text circulated in the Chinese Church at that time, namely an article titled *The Church: Holy and Catholic*, authored by Fr. Matthew Chen Zhemín.

So could an article written by an individual Chinese priest be regarded as the Vatican's response to Beijing? This thesis argues for an affirmative answer for three reasons. First, Fr. Chen was a prominent figure in the Chinese Church. He was a member of the Catholic Central Bureau in China at the time and had a close working relationship with the internuncio, Riberi.²⁶⁵ Second, the article directly touched upon the issues raised by Beijing in *Correct Understanding*, namely the 'three-self' initiative and 'imperialist' concerns. Third, the distribution of this article in the Chinese Church was endorsed and encouraged by the Vatican – at that time, this article was sent by the church authorities to every diocese in China and was widely circulated among Catholics. (In fact, the original pamphlets I discovered in the Hunan Archive bear the word '*con approbatione ecclesiastica*', which is clear evidence that these materials were approved by the church authorities)

²⁶⁵ Mariani, p.57.

The existence of *Holy and Catholic* was noted by both Beijing and the Western scholars. For Beijing, the church's distribution of booklets containing *Holy and Catholic* was listed as one of the many activities against the PRC government ordered by Riberi. On 5 Sep 1951, *Renmin Ribao* published an article titled '*Riberi's Major Crimes*', in which the existence of *Holy and Catholic* was mentioned:

'Riberi gave orders to the Catholic Central Bureau (which was under his direct command) and printed in Shanghai a huge number of publications that sabotaged the government's reputation, sowed dissention between Catholics and the government and slandered the patriotic movement of Chinese Catholics. For example, *Study Reference* and *The Church: Holy and Catholic* ... these publications carry Riberi's reactionary orders and instructions; (they) fool and deceive Catholics and threaten the patriotic movement of local Catholics.'²⁶⁶

From here we can see Beijing's negative attitude towards *Holy and Catholic*. However, in the open publications from the side of Beijing, there is no direct quotation of the original text of *Holy and Catholic*. On the other hand, the existence of Fr. Chen's work was also noticed by Mariani, who pointed out that '*Study Reference*' and '*Holy and Catholic*' are overlapping texts: '*Study Reference*' was a pamphlet distributed by the church at that time and '*Holy and Catholic*' was included in the pamphlet.²⁶⁷ Mariani had also quoted the opening paragraph of Fr. Chen's *Holy and Catholic*. However, apart from a very brief summary of *Holy and Catholic*'s main content that was less than one page long, Mariani did not provide any detailed analysis of the original text. Considering its major influence on Sino-Vatican relations, I argue that Mariani's brief treatment of *Holy and Catholic* constituted a major omission.

²⁶⁶ My own translation from the original text (from Renmin Ribao's online digital archive): Renmin Ribao, 'The Major Crimes of Riberi', *Renmin Ribao*, Page 1, 5 Sep 1951 < <http://58.68.146.102/rmrb/19510905/1> > [accessed 16 Sep 2016].

²⁶⁷ Mariani, p.57.

In the following part I will provide an analysis of *Holy and Catholic* and discuss its implications for Sino-Vatican relations.

The original full Chinese text of *The Church: Holy and Catholic* is somewhat elusive. Part of the text was included in the appendix of Su's work *The Historical Material of the Martyrdom in China from 1948-1957*, on which my analysis is based. In fact, during my research in the Hunan Provincial Archive I have discovered an original copy of *The Church: Holy and Catholic*. However, due to time constraints, it was impossible for me to read the entire text into the recorder. What I could do at that time was to take note of the pamphlet's table of contents.²⁶⁸ I discovered that the original length of *Holy and Catholic* was greater than I had previously estimated – in fact, the part of the text included in Su's work was the conclusion of *Holy and Catholic*. Below are the headings of the pamphlet *The Church: Holy and Catholic*:

The Church: Holy and Catholic

Fr. Chen Zhemin,

No.197, Yue Yang Rd, Shanghai²⁶⁹

Chapter 1 Introduction

- The universality and unity of the Catholic Church
- The church is the church of all humanity
- The Church's Catholicity and Unity
- Martyrs are those who sacrifice for unity
- God transcends nationalities
- The Catholic Church transcends classes
- The Catholic Church transcends politics and political systems
- The Church has no connection with political views
- The true task of the Catholic Church
- The Catholic Church nurtures the foundation of society
- The Catholic Church does not endorse a certain political system
- The meaning of the church's works

Chapter 2 Organisations of the Catholic Church

- The fundamental organisations of the Catholic Church

²⁶⁸ Hunan Provincial Archive, 221-1-7. Translated by the author of this thesis.

²⁶⁹ This address is where the Catholic Central Bureau (CCB) was situated in Shanghai. This means that this booklet was issued with the authority of the CCB, which represents the official view of the church (and certainly of Rome) at that time.

- The Vatican and the Roman Curia
- The Pope does not have political preferences
- The Pope's person should not be divided
- Ways to compromise the unity of the church
- The development of the church does not rely on political support
- The church does not allow any interference from secular regimes
- The expansion of Catholicism depends totally on her own effort
- Catholic preachers belong to the church and have no relationships with their nationalities
- The beacon of faith and light
- Some splendid examples
- Missionaries coming to China
- The Catholic Church was a victim of imperialism. The Church opposes invasions.
- The Catholic Church fights imperialism
- The Catholic Church does not rely on money to evangelise
- The Catholic Church does not receive direct or indirect funds from foreign countries
- The source of the church's economy: self-donations
- The donations are done anonymously
- Five important conclusions
- The church has only friends
- Hence, the church does not require secret activities
- **The church has long implemented the 'three-self' principles**
- **What are genuine 'self-preaching, self-funding and self-governing' principles**
- **Popular view of 'self-preaching, self-funding and self-governing' principles**
- **On 'self-preaching'**
- **On 'self-funding'**
- **On 'self-governing'**
- **One should differentiate between the internal issues of the church and the patriotic movement**
- **Warnings to some fellow Catholics**
- **Some points to remember**
- **Conclusion**

From this table of content and my quick skimming of the original booklet, I found that the part included in Su's book is actually the last part (I have set these headings in bold letters) of Fr. Chen's *Holy and Catholic*. Although I did not manage to transcribe the rest of Fr. Chen's original text, this table of contents already tells us the overall structure of the original text. The first thing we can discern from this table of contents is that *Holy and Catholic* was a detailed treatise on the church's transcendental self-understanding. According to the opinion of Fr. Chen's text, the church is totally transcendental in the face of politics, political systems and classes. Due to this transcendental nature, the church, including the Pope, has nothing to do with imperialism and invasion. Foreign missionaries should be regarded as the church's preachers alone and their respective nationalities should not

be taken into account. Second, the church is uncompromising towards any interference from secular governments and does not rely on the support of any regime. Third, the church has its own definition of the ‘three-self’ principles. In the following part I will provide an analysis of the excerpt included in Su’s book, which was the last part of the original text and the direct reply to Beijing’s ‘three-self’ initiative.²⁷⁰

The main content of the last part of *Holy and Catholic* could be summarised into the following chains of equivalence.

Chain 1: ‘Three-self’ according to the church

The Catholic Church’s ‘three-self’ = does not rely on any coercive power or political power to help preaching = does not rely on political subsidies = is not under direct and indirect control of any regime = implemented since creation, uninterrupted

Chain 2: ‘Three-self’ according to ‘popular view’

The ‘three-self’ from a political perspective = expelling every foreign missionary = does not receive donations from the universal Catholic church = does not allow vertical structure = threatening fundamental creeds = not genuine Catholicism

Chain 3: Patriotism as defined by the church

Catholics’ patriotism = encouraged by the church’s creeds = opposing imperialism = the church should not be involved in politics = does not mean that every missionary should be expelled

From these chains, we can discern that the main purpose of the last part of *Holy and Catholic* was to challenge the government’s definition of ‘three-self’ and offer Chinese Catholics an alternative interpretation of ‘three-self’. I use chain 1 to summarise Fr. Chen’s effort to re-define the meaning of

²⁷⁰ Ruoyi Su, *Historical Material*, Appendix, pp.15-22.

‘three-self’. According to Fr. Chen, the Catholic Church had always implemented ‘three-self’ principles since the beginning of the church. ‘Because the Catholic Church has used her own manpower and economic power to preach the gospel to every part of the world from ancient times to the present, something which was free from control by any external organisation, she is definitely implementing the principle of ‘self-preaching, self-funding and self-governing’. ‘So what was the Catholic ‘three-self’ according to Fr. Chen? Fr. Chen first defined ‘self-preaching’ – ‘The meaning of “self-preaching” in Catholicism is that the church would not use any coercive power or political power to help preaching.’ Then Fr. Chen argued that the number of Chinese clergy was not sufficient for running the church alone: ‘Now, the Chinese clergy has already been formed, but their number is far from enough. Therefore, foreign clergy are still needed. In this situation, the correct understanding should not be from a political perspective, but from the church’s perspective.’

Fr. Chen then proceeded to discuss the meaning of ‘self-funding’. According to him, the funds that the church acquires from abroad do not have the slightest relationship with secular regimes: ‘The church is like a human body, where the material needs of evangelisation are supplied and supported by the power of the whole body. This is just like the heart that supplies blood to every limb and maintains the entire body’s life and development ... therefore, the funds received by the church could not be considered as foreign funds.’ In other words, Fr. Chen argued that due to the church’s transcendental nature, the money she received from abroad should be considered as an internal transfer between the universal church and the local church – in this sense this fund is not political and should not be considered as ‘foreign’.

After discussing the first two parts of the concept of ‘three-self’, Fr. Chen went on to examine the last part, ‘self-governing’. He argued that this is the most essential part of the Catholic faith which often becomes the target of

attacks from secular regimes: 'In the past, every type of politician made many attempts to obstruct the universality of the church organisation, under every kind of disguise. (The aim) was to create a so-called autonomous church and cut off the church's ties with the Roman Pontiff.' He further pointed out that the call of patriotism and accusation of imperialism could be used as a wedge to divide the church, which would compromise the catholicity of the church: 'In this circumstance, the church is no longer a 'self-preaching' Catholic Church, but a 'self-created' Catholic Church – that is a degenerated version of Catholicism, which is not genuine.' Fr. Chen then appealed for political issues and religious issues to be 'distinguished clearly' instead of 'woven together'.

When defining the church's understanding of 'three-self', Fr. Chen also summarised a 'popular view of three-self', the idea which I have arranged into chain 2. In fact, although Fr. Chen did not specify who was behind such a 'popular view', it is quite clear that this 'popular view' is the church's understanding of Beijing's version of 'three-self'. Fr. Chen argued that the actual implication of this version of 'three-self' was that the church should: (1) expel all foreign missionaries; (2) refuse all donations from abroad; (3) dismantle every vertical structure in the church. Regarding the third point, Fr. Chen pointed out: '(the aim of this version of 'self-governing') is to separate the dioceses of the Chinese Catholic Church from the universal church, especially from the Roman Pontiff (who was considered as the centre of imperialism). This will make all the dioceses, and every parish, completely detached from the bishop and become non-systemic units independent from each other.' As a conclusion, Fr. Chen argued that this 'popular version' of 'three-self' was extremely detrimental to the church. 'This is a heavy blow to the fundamental creeds of Catholicism. No Catholic can remain silent in the face of this.'

Fr. Chen then pointed out that patriotism was already part of the church's teachings. (Chain 3) He argued that loving one's country was part of

Catholic's obligation: 'The Catholic creeds encourage citizens to love their own countries. This is part of their obligation as human beings, which is fundamental and compulsory.' He then argued that the church was not imperialism and therefore does not need to admit to any connection with imperialism: 'the church herself is against every kind of imperialism, she does not need any manifesto, nor any political movement to show this stance'. In other words, Fr. Chen does not think the church has any need to participate in the 'anti-imperialist' movement promoted by Beijing because the church's participation in these movements could be regarded as a tacit assent that the church has connections with imperialism. He concluded that the church should not be a direct participant in 'patriotic movements'. 'Because she, the church, does not have such a political feature – this is outside her boundaries. She cannot interfere with the area of politics. The church is the church while the state is the state. The boundary between them should be clear.'

In the above part I have shown the chains of equivalence in the conclusive chapter of Fr. Chen's *Holy and Catholic* and explained them in detail. So what kind of conclusion can we draw from this textual analysis and how did the text influence the relationship between Beijing and Rome?

The first thing we should bear in mind is that the text of *Holy and Catholic*, despite being written in the individual name of Fr. Chen, carries the authority of the church and should be considered as a direct reply towards Beijing's Catholic Policy. In sending this booklet to every diocese in China, the Vatican showed its endorsement of Fr. Chen's view. *Holy and Catholic* attempted to engage with Beijing in defining two key signifiers in church discourse, namely what is the exact meaning of 'three-self' and what is patriotism. I argue that two tendencies reflected in the text are worthy of notice.

The first tendency shown by the text of *Holy and Catholic* was its conservatism – the idea that the church has no need to make any accommodation in the face of the new regime. According to Fr. Chen's opinion, the church does not need to, and would not, change under the rule of Beijing because 'three-self' had always been part of the church's principles. In Fr. Chen's argument, 'self-preaching' means the church does not depend on any external power to evangelise; 'self-funding' means the church will only receive foreign money if it is from a Catholic source; 'self-governing' means the church is free from the control of any secular regime. However, in the historical circumstance of that time, all these wordings would sound very unpleasant to Beijing because Fr. Chen's argument does not address Beijing's safety concerns at all. In fact, from the analysis of key texts from Beijing's side (e.g. *Correct Understanding*), we could see that Beijing's intention in promoting the 'three-self' movement was quite clear: in the circumstances of an ongoing war with the US, the church should reassure the government that they would not ally with the West and sabotage the new regime's rule. However, Fr. Chen not only refused to reassure Beijing, but also totally rejected Beijing's call to purge imperialism. Following Fr. Chen's logic, as the church has nothing to do with imperialism, it would not follow Beijing's call for 'cutting off ties with imperialism' at all. Such outright refusal would seem offensive in the eyes of Beijing at the time.

The second tendency of *Holy and Catholic* was its strong idealism and its stern denial of the church's political aspects. Fr. Chen iterated again and again that the boundary between politics and the church should be clear and the government should not interfere with the church's affairs. This argument was based on the church's transcendence. According to Fr. Chen, the church was totally detached from secular regimes and did not depend on any regime's power to promote Catholicism. The church draws funds only from the church itself and donations coming from abroad should not be considered as foreign funds. Furthermore, Fr. Chen argued that foreign

missionaries, because they are church members, should not be considered foreign at all. In other words, Fr. Chen described a highly idealized picture of the church which has no connection with secular politics and which does not care about worldly affairs. However, was this idealised argument persuasive in Beijing's eyes? Perhaps the answer should be negative. Again, highlighting the church's transcendence did not reassure Beijing's security concern. In fact, the intended audience of such a claim of transcendence was more likely to be ordinary Chinese Catholics – which I will discuss in the next paragraph.

The third tendency of *Holy and Catholic* was its frequent attempt to mould the self-understanding of ordinary Chinese Catholics and discourage them from cooperating with the new regime. Despite touching upon the key issues raised by Beijing, the booklet *Holy and Catholic* did not address Beijing directly. Instead, the style and wording shows that it was addressed to ordinary Chinese Catholics. The manner of communication (sent from Shanghai to dioceses all over China) clearly shows that the author of the text (Fr. Chen, endorsed by the Vatican) hoped to directly affect the self-understanding of ordinary Chinese Catholics and make them follow Rome's stance, regardless of the feelings of Beijing. In the meantime, no evidence showed that the Vatican sought a direct dialogue with the PRC government. All these reasons meant that Beijing's authority was ignored by Fr. Chen and by the Vatican who was behind him. Therefore, it is not strange that Beijing was angry at such a manner of communication which bypassed the PRC government and exerted influence on Chinese Catholics directly.

To conclude, *Holy and Catholic* was the church's most influential and systematic response to Beijing's Catholic policy in 1951. However, the text shows no willingness to make any accommodation to the regime of Beijing. Instead, the text conveys a clear message that the church would not follow the government's 'three-self' initiative and would make no effort to reassure Beijing's security concern. Indeed, the text of *Holy and Catholic* was more

eager to influence the understanding of ordinary Catholics in China than it was to engage in any dialogue with Beijing. The text was an open challenge to the government's definition of key signifiers in Beijing's Catholic policy. In the discourse represented by *Holy and Catholic*, Beijing was portrayed as a power 'external to the church' that harbours malicious intent towards Catholicism.

Hence, it would not be strange that Beijing was irritated by *Holy and Catholic* – in my research in the Hunan Provincial Archive, on the original copy of booklet, I discovered a hand-written instruction (which was obviously written by the officials at the time), which reads:

*'Please study fully this reactionary document and then solicit a persuasive essay (maximum 3000 Chinese characters) that can mercilessly refute its reactionary arguments.'*²⁷¹

From this instruction we can discern that the impact of *Holy and Catholic* on Sino-Vatican relations was that it greatly aroused Beijing's resentment. However, if Fr. Chen's work annoyed Beijing, activities that occurred in local churches turned the prospect of Sino-Vatican relations from bad to worse. In the next section I shall reveal a largely forgotten aspect of the church's agency in Sino-Vatican relations: the anti-Beijing publicity campaign.

The Church's Anti-Beijing Publicity Campaign

During my research in the Hunan Provincial Archive I discovered some original historical documents which, I believe, could somehow remedy a flaw in previous literature and shed light on the church's actions towards the PRC government in its interaction with Beijing before the expulsion of the papal

²⁷¹ The hand-written instruction was dated 18 May 1951. From Hunan Provincial Archive, 221-1-7.

internuncio. These documents are pamphlets and leaflets circulated in local Catholic churches in Hunan Province in the year 1951 – they were collected by local officials for internal reference and were put in a dedicated folder entitled ‘reactionary leaflets’.²⁷² During my data collection, I recorded many of them. In the following part I will show the main contents of four typical leaflets and provide my analysis of them.

Proposal to create a Catholic Party

This is a pamphlet bearing the stamp of the Cathedral of Changsha. On the first page there is anonymous handwriting saying ‘Humbly seeking the advice and correction of Your Excellency’.

The author of the manifesto was identified as ‘the Committee for Organising the Catholic Party’. The pamphlet lamented the situation in China after the end of WWII. According to its author, no matter whether they were the victorious states (e.g. Britain, France) or the defeated states (e.g. Japan, Italy) they had all focused their energy on economic development. By contrast, ‘our country – the Republic of China’ was engaged in constant warfare between the KMT and the communists and the state was on the verge of total collapse. In these circumstances, Catholics should shoulder their social responsibility and organise their own party to participate in politics. The main task of this Catholic Party would be to contribute to the reconstruction of the nation and to supervise and curb corruption. Then the author gave a preliminary plan for creating a Catholic Party, their vision for participating politics, and the criteria for membership. At the end of the pamphlet there was a sample membership CV and a sample membership card.

²⁷² Hunan Provincial Archive. 221-1-7.

From this pamphlet it can be seen that the local church had active plans to organise a party and participate in secular politics. The anonymous handwriting, according to my guess, indicates that this pamphlet was an internal copy sent to Petronius Lacchio, the Archbishop of Changsha at the time, for revision before publication. The stamp of the Cathedral of Changsha shows that this document was endorsed by the church. It could be argued that this pamphlet could be dated prior to 1949, as there was no mention of the new regime in Beijing in the text. However, the reason that this pamphlet was included in the collection is that it was still in circulation up to 1951. We can imagine how this pamphlet would have appeared in the eyes of the officials of the Bureau of Religious Affairs at the time – it clearly showed that the church had its own ambition for secular politics.

The Truth concerning the Communist Party

This leaflet was published by the Catholic Truth Society of Hong Kong. The author of the leaflet pointed out that the love of riches and loathing of poverty is part of human nature. Hence, this selfish nature is the origin of class conflicts. It is very hard to find a balanced way to solve such class conflicts. The fault of communism was that it only paid attention to ‘one side of the conflict’. Therefore, communism caused bloodshed and massacres in the world and Soviet Russia was an example of this. Dr. Sun Yat-sen’s ‘the Three Principles of the People’²⁷³ was a better alternative to communism. The author concluded that the widespread hunger and rebellion in Soviet Russia was clear proof that communism could not be achieved in the world.

²⁷³ Dr. Sun Yat-sen was the founding father of the KMT and ‘the Three Principles of the People’ was the official ideology of the KMT regime.

From the publisher's information, we can see that this leaflet was published and printed in Hong Kong. In fact, the Catholic Truth Society of Hong Kong, founded in 1934, has always been the official publisher of the Diocese of Hong Kong.²⁷⁴ Its status as a part of series means that other similar anti-communist leaflets must have been sent to mainland China from Hong Kong. Besides its denouncement of communism, it should be noticed that the author showed strong sympathy towards the KMT regime's ideology. This siding with the KMT regime obviously contradicted the claim that 'the Pope does not have a political preference' as argued by Fr. Chen in *Holy and Catholic*.

Oppose Communism with Resolution

This short leaflet was published by the Publicity Department of the Chinese Catholic Youth Organisation. Below is its full text:

'To have a solution to the current political situation of China, the Communist Party must be eradicated. To eradicate today's Communist Party in China, we need to strengthen education on morality. To strengthen China's moral education, the only option is Catholic Education.

Catholicism is the only (acceptable) foundation of morality and includes freedom, equality and fraternity. Catholicism is an effective antidote to communism and is communism's arch-enemy.

Schools should have a Catholic curriculum because they can then strengthen the moral foundation of young people and defeat the Communist Party in China. Catholicism must be promoted with swiftness. If one wants to seek freedom and equality in China, he must devote himself to the promotion of Catholicism. If one wants

²⁷⁴ Information from the Catholic Centre of Hong Kong's official website. From: Catholic Centre of Hong Kong, 'Introduction' <<http://www.catholiccentre.org.hk/intro.htm>> [Accessed 19 Aug 2016].

to realise the ultimate unification of China, he must promote the spirit of Catholicism.’

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If the previous leaflet was criticising communism in general, this leaflet certainly opened fire directly on the CPC. Filled with short political slogans, this leaflet used strong words against the CPC (e.g. eradicate, antidote, archenemy) and put the church and the Communist Party in stark opposition.

China and the Communist Party

The leaflet started with a bitter denouncement of the Communist Party of China: ‘The Communist Party robs households, murders people, commits arson, breaks laws, disturbs society – all these atrocities make Chinese people gnash their teeth in anger and they cannot control their hatred. Communism is considered by our compatriots as a thought system for vipers and beasts.’ Then the author argued that ‘where there is a communist government, there will be bloodshed’. The author then went on to discuss the situation in the USSR and pointed out that communism will ‘hurt democracy in China’.

In the four leaflets I have mentioned above, this leaflet’s denouncement of the Communist Party of China was the most vehement. The author of this leaflet used the strongest terms possible to attack the CPC and compared the communists to criminals.

So what can these leaflets tell us? In fact, these four pamphlets/leaflets are not exhaustive of the total number of Catholic anti-Beijing materials

²⁷⁵ The end of the leaflet reads: ‘The Publicity Department of Chinese Catholic Youth Organisation. Reprinting is welcomed.’

collected in the archival folder – there are other titles in the collection, such as *China will Soon Become a Colony of Russia!* ; *How Catholics Can Fight the Communist Party*; *The Fundamental Theory of Anti-communism*. Indeed, this leaflet collection was one of my most interesting discoveries in the Hunan Provincial Archive because they show a rarely noticed ‘belligerent side’ of the church’s activities in China before the expulsion of the internuncio, namely in that the church had actively engaged in a publicity campaign against Beijing. From the content of these leaflets, it can be discerned that the church’s publicity campaign against communism had already exceeded a metaphysical/doctrinal discussion of communism and became a direct attack on Beijing’s rule. In other words, the church had acted in contradiction of the transcendence promised in Fr. Chen’s *Holy and Catholic* – it was no longer detached from secular politics but became an active participant in it. By expressing sympathy for the KMT and openly attacking Beijing, the church was crossing the red line of the new regime.

4.3 Conclusion of the Chapter

In this chapter I have examined the key texts that led to the expulsion of the papal internuncio from China in 1951. In analysing these texts, I have tried to draw readers’ attention to two features of Beijing’s discourse:

First, despite the fact that there are many Marxist signifiers in Beijing’s texts, the ideology these texts conveyed showed some distance from orthodox Marxism – Beijing’s texts did not touch much upon class struggle and their attitude was more benign towards religion compared to Lenin’s works. To be more specific, although ‘communism’ was the central signifier chosen by the regime of Beijing at the time, its exact meaning was already re-interpreted by Beijing to accommodate the Chinese situation. Briefly, Beijing’s reinterpreted version of ‘communism’ was actually different from

the orthodox versions of communism applied in the USSR and other European countries in that the Chinese version was focused on Chinese nationalism, the desire to exercise sovereignty independently and the loathing of Western political interference. However, all this nationalist content would still appear under the surface of the central signifier 'communism'.

Second, Beijing's texts at that time show that the new regime's perception of the Catholic Church in China was not fully matured. To be more specific, the church-related signifiers in Beijing's discourse were not connected to a fully-developed identity (e.g. archenemy). In other words, whether the church should be identified as friend or enemy was still undecided at that time in Beijing's discourse. However, from the texts we can discern that Beijing wished that the church could become a friend, namely part of the 'patriotic people'. In the circumstances of the Korean War, Beijing hoped that the church could reassure the government by distancing itself from the west and putting a stop to the situation where the church was led by foreign missionaries. Furthermore, when talking about the church, no strong words, nor negative expressions were adopted in Beijing's texts.

All these expressions could be regarded as Beijing's invitation to dialogue with the church and the Vatican which was behind it. In sum, the meaning of church-related signifiers is not fixed in Beijing's discourse at the time and Beijing was prepared to adjust its definitions according to feedback. However, on the other hand, it should also be noticed that Beijing's undifferentiated treatment of Catholicism and Protestantism and the regime's haste to promote the 'three-self' movement in the Catholic church had raised suspicions from the church and Rome and increased the government's difficulties in winning over Chinese Catholics.

On the other hand, Fr. Chen's *Holy and Catholic* was the church's systematic response to Beijing's religious policy. Despite its calm tone, *Holy*

and Catholic was a stern refusal to Beijing's call for patriotism and expressed clearly that the church would not make any accommodation to the new regime. In his treatise, Fr. Chen highlighted the church's transcendence and her detachment from secular politics. Based on this claim, Fr. Chen asked Beijing not to interfere with the church's internal religious affairs. The church's decision to send this treatise to all dioceses in China greatly upset Beijing.

The anti-communist campaign that occurred in local churches in China was unhelpful towards the improvement of Sino-Vatican relations. From the leaflets discovered in the Hunan Provincial Archive, it can be discerned that the local church had betrayed Fr. Chen's transcendent claim and actively participated in secular politics. In the church's publicity campaign, communism in general was the target for denouncement, but the attack was often extended to the CPC and the PRC government as well. The authors of these leaflets attempted to connect the CPC with highly negative signifiers, such as 'vipers' and 'beasts'. Moreover, the leaflets showed strong sympathy for the KMT regime. In this way, the church sided with the KMT and engaged in propaganda warfare against Beijing. Hence, this thesis argues that any narrative about Beijing's harsh measures against the church should also take the church's hostile actions towards the government into account – the church in 1951 was not a mere victim. In sum, the church's publicity campaign against Beijing undermined Beijing's rule over China and certainly provoked Beijing's strong reaction.

In discussing the church's anti-communist campaign, I need to address one question: should the Vatican be held responsible for all these? After all, these leaflets were not directly issued by the Vatican. Regarding this question, I argue that the Vatican certainly should shoulder responsibility for the local church's anti-Beijing campaign. First, the fact that these anti-government leaflets were distributed by local churches definitely could not escape Rome's knowledge. Second, the leaflets came from authoritative

church sources (e.g. the Catholic Truth Society Hong Kong) outside China and their contents were endorsed by Rome. Hence, although there is no evidence that Rome actively encouraged the local churches' political propaganda against Beijing, the Vatican should at least be held responsible for not acting. With full knowledge of the ongoing publicity campaign against Beijing, Rome had never given the local churches any instruction to 'stop'. In the end, the anti-communist campaign in the local churches belied Fr. Chen's claim of transcendence and compelled Beijing to mete out harsh measures against the church. The expulsion of the papal internuncio in 1951 was the direct result of this.

5. The Two Deadlocks (1952-58)

In this chapter, I will go on to discuss the subsequent development of Sino-Vatican relations from 1952 to 1956, after the expulsion of Archbishop Riberi from the Chinese mainland. This is a relatively long time period and I will not try to cover all the historical events during this period. Instead, I will focus on four flashpoints that exerted a major influence on Sino-Vatican relations. First, this thesis will examine the papal internuncio's 13-month stay in Hong Kong after his expulsion. This event led to the relocation of the Vatican's Nunciature to Taipei, which constituted the first 'deadlock' of Sino-Vatican relations. My aim here is to answer the question of why the internuncio's prolonged stay in Hong Kong failed to improve Rome's relationship with Beijing.

Second, the thesis will proceed to shed light on the CCP's internal deliberation on Catholic policy in 1952. The aim is to show the 'inner thinking process' of Beijing during this period and reveal how Beijing adjusted its Catholic policy according to feedback from the church and Rome. Third, this thesis will analyse the Pope's message regarding the 'Year of Mary' and Beijing's evaluation of this. I will shed light on how Rome's general message towards the worldwide church could exert an influence on Chinese Catholics and then impact Beijing's policy. Last but not least, the thesis will give insights into the first episcopal consecration in China without Roman approval in 1958, which caused the second 'deadlock' of Sino-Vatican relations. I will try to illustrate that interactions continued to matter at the time of the crisis and how hostile actions would turn the situation from bad to worse.

In fact, among these four events, only the last one was a typical 'flashpoint' in which Beijing and Rome openly and fiercely clashed – the first three are all 'silent' flashpoints where there were no open exchanges of fire between

the two sides. Due to the absence of overt hostilities, these ‘silent’ flashpoints were largely overlooked by previous literature. It was only because of the discovery of the relevant historical materials in the archive that I could now give more insights into these ‘silent but important’ flashpoints in Sino-Vatican relations. It is hoped that by examining these forgotten moments of Beijing-Rome interactions, I can shed light on how Beijing’s perception of Rome affected the PRC government’s Catholic policy and illustrate how Rome’s actions and speeches, even when not addressing Beijing, could exert influence on Sino-Vatican relations.

After examining the three relatively ‘silent’ flashpoints of Sino-Vatican relations, at the end of this chapter I shall analyse the clash between Beijing and Rome over the episcopal appointment and consecration in 1958. Although previous authors have all given some coverage to this event, they have not paid enough attention to the underlying constructivist process between Beijing and Rome and often drew oversimplified conclusions about this historical event. In the light of such shortcomings in previous literature, this thesis will go further by using new archival evidence to illustrate Beijing and Rome’s respective agencies during the event and discuss why Beijing finally decided to push forward the consecrations without approval from Rome. A conclusion about the major findings will be given at the end of this chapter.

5.1 After the Expulsion: The Internuncio in Hong Kong

Previous Literature on the Internuncio’s Stay in Hong Kong

In previous literature on Sino-Vatican relations in the 1950s, very little attention was paid to Archbishop Riberi’s activities after his expulsion from mainland China and its implications for Sino-Vatican relations. Chen and

Jiang gave the most detailed historical account of Riberi's move from Hong Kong to Taiwan based on their studies of the diplomatic archives in Taiwan.²⁷⁶ According to Chen and Jiang, after his arrival in Hong Kong, Riberi showed great unwillingness to accept the KMT regime's invitation to Taiwan. Riberi's reluctance worried Taipei, who desperately needed international recognition at that time. When the KMT regime's Minister of Foreign Affairs, George Yeh Kung-chao asked Riberi whether he could pay a visit to Taiwan, Riberi answered that he feared that if he went to Taiwan, the communists might 'increase their persecution' against Catholics in mainland China. In the light of this, he wished to remain in Hong Kong until further instructions from Rome. The KMT regime then contacted Rome to ask whether the Holy See could move its embassy to Taipei. Similarly, Rome refused Taipei's request and explained that the Holy See did not want to irritate Beijing at that delicate moment.

After his expulsion from Nanjing, Riberi arrived in Hong Kong on 8 Sep 1951. On his arrival, the internuncio was welcomed and hailed by large crowds of Catholics at the railway station. Riberi issued a written statement in which he expressed his feelings after the expulsion:

'My love for the Chinese people never changes. I assumed the position of ambassador to China on the Holy Father's order, and I always respect and sympathise with the Chinese people. Therefore, in spite of all the difficulties, I stayed in China up to now. I am greatly saddened by this departure from China. But I will continue to pray ardently for the Chinese people, the Catholic priests, friars, nuns and laity.'²⁷⁷

²⁷⁶ Chen and Jiang, pp. 244-251.

²⁷⁷ My translation from Chinese. Su, *Historical Material*, pp. [51]28- [51]29.

Afterwards, Archbishop Riberi spent 13 months in Hong Kong, with the hope that the situation in mainland China could somehow change. However, during Riberi's stay in Hong Kong, the Vatican did not see any positive changes on the part of Beijing and the pro-KMT view within the Roman Curia gained the upper hand. Rome finally decided to embrace the KMT and, on 26 Oct 1952, Riberi went to Taiwan and the Nunciature was relocated to Taipei.

Interestingly, according to Wei,²⁷⁸ Riberi's travel to Taipei was far from a happy journey - the KMT regime deliberately granted him a tourist visa instead of a diplomatic one to express their dislike of Riberi. Chen and Jiang had also quoted a cold dialogue between Riberi and the vice-minister of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the KMT government, which revealed the far less than friendly attitude between the internuncio and the Taipei regime.²⁷⁹ All these clearly showed that Riberi's long stay in Hong Kong and his unwillingness to move to Taiwan deeply annoyed the KMT regime.

Hence, from these historical accounts we can discern an important fact: that Riberi's long stay in Hong Kong was intended to be a reconciliatory gesture to Beijing. By Riberi's gesture, the Vatican showed reluctance to relocate the Nunciature to Taipei and patiently waited for positive signals from mainland China. On the other hand, this gesture greatly annoyed Taipei, who repeatedly requested that the Nunciature should be moved to Taiwan. However, in the end, the internuncio's 13-month wait was in vain and the Vatican did not see any positive response from Beijing. It was under these circumstances that the Vatican finally decided to embrace Taiwan. What was the reason behind that? Why did this reconciliatory gesture fail to obtain

²⁷⁸ Louis Tsing-Sing Wei, *Le Saint-Siège et la Chine* (Paris : Editions A. Allais, 1968), p.221.

²⁷⁹ Chen and Jiang, pp.250-251.

any cordial reply from Beijing? Did Beijing simply ignore Riberi's prolonged stay in Hong Kong? The previous literature did not give us any answers.

Beijing's Evaluation of the Internuncio Riberi

Fortunately, newly discovered material from the side of Beijing may help us to better understand Beijing's attitude towards Riberi after his expulsion from mainland China. An internal document shows that the CCP paid close attention to Riberi's activities in Hong Kong and evaluated his speeches about Beijing. This document ²⁸⁰ was a report issued by the Religious Affairs Office at the State Council and was distributed to local religious affairs bureaus on 4 Nov 1952. The title of the report is 'The Imperialist Riberi's 13-month stay in Hong Kong and his reactionary activities'. In the opening paragraph, the author of document gave an overall evaluation of Riberi's activities in Hong Kong:

'The Roman Curia's internuncio to China during the reactionary rule of KMT, Riberi, was expelled out of Chinese territory by the Military Commission of Nanjing on 4 Sep 1951. He arrived in Hong Kong on 8 Sep and stayed there for 13 months. In the end, he eventually embraced the Chiang Kai-shek's bandit gang in Taiwan, assuming again the post of 'ambassador'. During Riberi's 13-month stay in Hong Kong, he organised many reactionary activities with intensified efforts – this is sound proof that he has been a lackey and an accomplice of American Imperialism and of the Chiang Kai-shek bandit gang ever since his arrival in China in Dec 1946. He sternly opposes the Chinese people's liberation endeavours.'

Indeed, the above comments have answered a historical question, namely how Beijing saw the papal internuncio after his expulsion. As we can see, in Beijing's opinion, the papal internuncio Riberi was defined as a villain, a counter-revolutionary and a staunch ally of the KMT regime and the US. Such a strong and negative claim prompts us to ask: why, after such a

²⁸⁰ Hunan Provincial Archive, 221-22-22.

prolonged wait in Hong Kong, had the papal internuncio earned a label of 'counterrevolutionary'? Why had Beijing failed to sense even the slightest goodwill from Riberi? Let us see how the author of the document proceeded to evaluate Riberi's deeds in Hong Kong.

For conciseness and clarity, I arranged the main ideas of the author's evaluation into chains of equivalence. The author had examined Riberi's interaction with three groups of people, namely the expelled foreign missionaries in Hong Kong, Chinese Catholic refugees, and the laity in Hong Kong. In light of this, the chains of equivalence will be summarised according to these main political actors in the text. In constructing the chains, I have paid attention to retain the original wording of the text as much as possible. We shall start from the first chain:

Chain 1 Overall evaluation

Antonio Riberi = harbouring foreign agents and spies while organising activities against New China = using Hong Kong as a secret anti-revolutionary base and applying Truman's 'Point Four Program' = recruiting youths and inciting Catholics to oppose the People's Government

This chain of equivalence was the basis for Riberi's label of 'counter-revolutionary'. According to Beijing's interpretation, Riberi's stay in Hong Kong was characterised by his malicious activities against 'New China', the newly founded PRC. Riberi's 'counterrevolutionary activities' were closely connected to the other three kinds of political actors in Hong Kong, namely the foreign missionaries expelled from mainland China, the Chinese 'Catholic refugees' in Hong Kong and the ordinary Catholics in Hong Kong. In Beijing's eyes, Riberi was interacting with these actors and rallying them to oppose the People's Republic. We shall see from the chains below how these actors were influenced by Riberi according to Beijing's evaluation:

Chain 2: Expelled foreign missionaries in Hong Kong

Imperialists in the Catholic Church = Spy groups under the cloak of Catholicism = those who arrived in Hong Kong and 'reported the conditions during their imprisonment in communist-controlled areas' to Riberi = the ones who were received by Riberi and his assistants = the ones who use abusive language to describe the PRC national flag = over 2200 people up to 1952, the majority of whom left China of their own volition = including organisers of the Legion of Mary expelled from China = sent abroad by Riberi to form an espionage network encircling New China

The term 'imperialists' was given to the expelled priests because the CPC regarded them as troublemakers and spies. The CCP noticed that they were warmly welcomed by the internuncio, who provided them with board and lodging in Hong Kong. Then the expelled priests would report their experiences in 'communist prisons' to Riberi. This reporting process may have had two meanings for Beijing. First, Beijing would regard these reports as a form of intelligence. After all, these priests were the last group of foreigners to leave 'Communist China' and the Vatican and the West could extract a good amount of intelligence from the expelled priests' descriptions of 'Communist China'. Second, perhaps more importantly, the expelled priests' depiction of China could be used as propaganda against Beijing. For a regime that had a deep desire to be recognized and respected by international society, the expelled priests' narrative of their torment in prisons would be a major blow to Beijing's international reputation.

What further angered Beijing was the expelled priests' derogatory description of the 'Five-star Red Flag' of the PRC: 'Yellow stars encircled by red blood, does that mean that the Yellow Race will sink into the deep sea of blood in great turmoil?' Moreover, they were in large numbers — over 2200 expelled priests in Hong Kong would be a nuisance to Beijing. Here, the document stressed that the majority of expelled priests left China of their own free will, which could be interpreted as a hint that many of them could

have stayed longer in China had they been more friendly to the new regime. The last part of the chain pointed out the schedule of Riberi — that these expelled priests would be sent out of China and would continue to offer their expertise to harm the new regime in the international scene. Such was Beijing's evaluation of the interaction between Riberi and the expelled foreign priests — what about the Chinese Catholics fleeing to Hong Kong? Let us see from the chain of equivalence below:

Chain 3: Chinese Catholic refugees in Hong Kong

Refugees = being visited by Riberi and Cardinal Spellman, the great American spy = gathering in Tiu Keng Leng and living in accommodation funded by Riberi = setting up new churches in Diamond Hill, Ngau Tau Kok, Ma On Shan = administered by an Italian priest, Fr. Crotti Amelio = baptized by and received confirmation from Riberi in great numbers

In this chain of equivalence, Beijing evaluated Riberi's influence on the Catholic refugee communities in Hong Kong. First, Beijing noticed that Riberi, accompanied by Cardinal Spellman, visited the Catholic refugees in Hong Kong. Spellman was vehemently anti-communist and long considered by the CCP as an enemy. For Beijing, the joint visit of Riberi and Spellman to the Catholic refugees was a reflection of the Vatican's alliance with the US. The Catholic refugee community was recruited by such an alliance to engage in anti-PRC activities.

Second, the Catholic refugees largely gathered in the area of Tiu Keng Leng, which had deep political implications. Tiu Keng Leng (English name 'Rennie's Mill') was an isolated neighbourhood in the suburb of Hong Kong. The area, nicknamed 'Little Taiwan', was famous for its large number of KMT sympathizers and widespread anti-communist sentiment — as most residents of Tiu Keng Leng were former KMT soldiers and their family members who had fled to Hong Kong. Thanks to this, Tiu Keng Leng

became an important base and 'service station' for the KMT agents who wished to infiltrate Mainland China. The document noticed that the Catholic refugees participated in the effort of 'turning Tiu Keng Leng from a desolate hill into a base'. (Before the 1950s, Tiu Keng Leng, a desolate hillside area, was largely uninhabited. It was almost entirely developed by the KMT refugees) The fact that large numbers of Catholic refugees gathered and settled in Tiu Keng Leng was a clear signal to Beijing that these Catholics were mixing with the KMT sympathizers and agents and therefore serving the KMT cause. Moreover, they received funds from Riberi and the Vatican, which proved that the Holy See was also a backer of the KMT.

Third, the Catholic refugees were quickly establishing new churches in other areas of Hong Kong. Beijing was not happy with that as these new churches might recruit more new members to oppose Beijing. Fourth, these Catholic refugees were administered by Fr. Crotti Amelio, an Italian priest expelled from Henan Province and now in charge of managing the Catholic refugees. The document quoted a comment from Fr. Amelio: 'These newly initiated Catholics from Northern China, having received the Holy Spirit, will act as brave soldiers of Christ. The bishops will inject them with a 'stimulant pack' from time to time and strengthen their ability to engage the enemies.' The fact that an expelled foreign priest was leading the Chinese Catholic refugees would be regarded by Beijing as a further proof that the Vatican was trying to recruit them to oppose Beijing.

Last but not least, Riberi presided at mass events during which large numbers of catechumens were baptized or given confirmation. During these events, the internuncio was reported to speak out against Beijing. According to the document, on 12 Oct 1951, Riberi said to the participants in a confirmation ceremony at Ma On Shan, Hong Kong: 'You are refugees here. But do keep calm, as you will soon return to your home town happily — after the recovery of the mainland! The term 'attack and recover the mainland' was a slogan frequently used in the KMT propaganda. In sum,

Riberi's activities towards the Catholic refugees in Hong Kong led the document to conclude that the internuncio was building a 'counter-revolutionary base' in Hong Kong. However, the document revealed more evidence to support the claim that Riberi was an 'imperialist', which will be shown in the chain of equivalence below:

Chain 4: The Laity in Hong Kong

Ordinary Catholic youth and laity = visited by Riberi in Catholic schools, encouraged by the internuncio = participating in activities of the Legion of Mary, praying for the persecuted Catholics in the mainland = several of whom were consecrated by Riberi, who Riberi encouraged to learn from the martyrs in the mainland

The document reviewed Riberi's interactions with the ordinary Catholic laity, especially the youth in Hong Kong. First, according to the document, Riberi visited two schools run by Catholic sisters in Hong Kong and encouraged students to 'learn from the sisters' examples of self-sacrifice'. Second, the Legion of Mary, considered by the CPC as a 'reactionary organisation', was encouraged and expanded in Hong Kong by the internuncio. The document described an event of the Legion of Mary in Hong Kong on 30 March 1952: 'over 1000 members of the Legion of Mary carrying standards of the Legion and shouting: "My queen, my mother, we fully belong to you, all that we have indeed belongs to you."' Then Riberi addressed them, saying: 'Today, let us again devote ourselves and the entire legion to Mary, the Queen of the Legion. Let us again take our oath of loyalty and pray to her. May she increase our strength, bless us and enable us to fight sins and the evil power for another year.' Furthermore, the document remarked that Riberi had also led Catholics to 'pray for the persecuted church in mainland China'. Third, Riberi consecrated many priests in person and encouraged them to 'imitate the just examples of the fathers in the mainland, who laid down their lives for the righteous cause.' Then the document quoted another comment from Riberi on 14 Sep 1952, when he attended a

memorial service for Bishop Francis Ford who died in the mainland during imprisonment:

'The communists often say that they won't allow Catholics to have the chance to become martyrs. However, they don't know that martyrdom means "to bear witness" — to bear witness that Christ is the Lord and to die for bearing such witness. The martyrs are like this, and their blood is the seed of converts.'

The document finally gave a conclusion about Riberi's 13-month stay in Hong Kong:

'In his 13-month stay in Hong Kong, Riberi was using Hong Kong as his base. Under the guidance of American imperialism, he continues to give orders and instructions, building a new reactionary fortress with his religious authority and economic power.... all these fully demonstrated his political attitude and his intention of organizing reactionary activities under the cloak of religion.'

How Can this Document Inform Us?

To conclude, from this document we can clearly see Beijing's attitude towards Riberi after his expulsion. Riberi's prolonged stay in Hong Kong not only failed to improve Beijing's view of him, but also further convinced Beijing that both the internuncio and the Vatican were allies of the KMT and the US. Therefore, it could be argued that the internuncio's stay in Hong Kong did not have any positive diplomatic results for the Vatican — on the one hand, Taipei regarded Riberi's unwillingness to come to Taiwan as a betrayal; on the other hand, Beijing considered Riberi's activities in Hong Kong as attempts to create a 'reactionary base'.

Why so? The two regimes paid attention to different aspects of Riberi's stay. Taipei worried about the internuncio's long reluctance to visit Taiwan while Beijing cared about Riberi's ability to subvert the communist government. On the part of Taipei, the regime's discomfort caused by Riberi's stay in

Hong Kong was easy to understand. When the KMT regime's international recognition was at serious stake, Riberi's refusal to follow the KMT to Taiwan was irritating and could even be considered disloyal. Such a view was also echoed by Wei, who commented on Riberi's deeds after the communist takeover of Mainland China: 'The first duty of a foreign ambassador is to follow, everywhere and always, the government to which he is accredited. In short, Riberi's Hong Kong stay will surely hurt Taipei's feelings.'²⁸¹

But why did this gesture also fail to please Beijing? It should be noted that Beijing interpreted Riberi's activities from their details. In other words, the events organized by Riberi in Hong Kong (e.g. visiting schools, consecrating priests) were part of the normal activities in the Catholic Church — these events were not subversive *per se*, it was the details of these events that made them subversive. In other words, Beijing paid close attention to Riberi's activities during these events and found them highly provocative.

So why did Riberi do and say what he did? A possible explanation could be that Riberi personally disliked the communists so much and made no effort to conceal his feelings. Or perhaps the internuncio thought these speeches were private and insignificant enough to escape Beijing's attention. Furthermore, the fact that Hong Kong was under British rule at that time may have given the internuncio a feeling that he was already 'outside China' and therefore free to speak, despite the fact that Beijing always regarded Hong Kong as still 'inside China'. No matter what the reason was behind Riberi's hostile speeches against Beijing, these details certainly antagonized Beijing and precluded any benign reading of Riberi's activities in Hong Kong during his long stay.

²⁸¹ Translated from French by the author of this thesis. From: Wei, *Le Saint-Siège et la Chine*, p.221.

In sum, Riberi's 13-month stay in Hong Kong could be considered another case of the Vatican's clumsy diplomacy, the root of which was Rome's ambivalence in its China policy. On the one hand, the Holy See deeply regretted the Church's severe setbacks in mainland China and tried to reach at least a truce with the new government in Beijing; on the other hand, Rome was burning with deep a hatred of communism and did not want to appear soft on a 'communist regime'. From a discursive viewpoint, it could be argued that the Vatican was too entrenched in its old memories of converging with KMT regime's discourse, to the extent that she was far from ready to face the new situation in China, namely the emergence of the CCP-related new discourses — that of absolute sovereignty and anti-West nationalism.

5.2 The CPC's Deliberation on Catholic Policy (1952)

'Catholic Resistance' as Described in Previous Literature

After the expulsion of the papal internuncio and the Nunciature's relocation to Taipei, Beijing and Rome exchanged an intense round of fire. In 1952, Pope Pius XII issued an apostolic letter *Cupimus Imprimis* which bitterly denounced Beijing's expulsion of the internuncio and encouraged Catholics in China to stay loyal to the Roman Pontiff. Facing the Holy See's denouncement, Beijing retorted with intensive publicity campaigns against the Vatican and further expulsions of foreign priests. Amidst the high tension between Beijing and Rome, the church's situation in China became very difficult. Not only had the church lost a huge amount of assets and personnel in the clash between Beijing and Rome, she also faced mounting pressure from the PRC government. The period from 1952 to 1955 saw increased clashes between the PRC government and local churches and the arrests of prominent clergy leaders.

The previous literature tends to depict these years as a time period during which the church suffered but resisted heroically while facing the increasingly fierce waves of attacks from the PRC government. Mariani argues that the government's strategy against the church during this period became more severe, and the strategy of mass arrests and expulsions replaced the previous strategy of targeted attack.²⁸² According to the narrative of previous authors, facing strong pressure from the government, Chinese Catholics did not compromise their stance and resisted the government's efforts to build a schismatic church.

Mariani paid special attention to the strong Catholic resistance in Shanghai during this period and argued that the PRC government's effort of subjugating the church was defeated in Shanghai. According to his narrative, the communist defeat was marked by three events. The first event was the Catholics in Shanghai's show of defiance during the commemoration events for Fr. Beda Chang. According to Mariani, Fr. Beda Chang was 'the first Catholic martyr in Shanghai' who died in a communist prison.²⁸³ Fr. Chang was a prominent church leader in Shanghai at the time. On 9 Aug 1951, he was suddenly arrested by the local police and was put in custody. Three months later, on 11 Nov, Fr. Chang died in prison. Regarding Fr. Chang's death, the explanation given by the government is that he died of disease during imprisonment, but it was widely believed by local Catholics that his death was caused by torture. Catholics rallied to mourn Fr. Chang and to express their defiance of the government. The defiance shown by the local Catholics deeply embarrassed the government and the local authorities were compelled to launch propaganda articles on newspapers against the reputation of the demised Fr. Chang. However,

²⁸² Mariani, p.vii.

²⁸³ Ibid., pp.87-91.

such propaganda was not very persuasive and local Catholics still considered Fr. Chang a martyr.

The second event was the local government's failure to dismantle the Legion of Mary in Shanghai.²⁸⁴ To be more specific, the communists tried every means to make the legionaries register with the government. But this effort was largely hindered by the Catholic priests and laity in Shanghai and the government failed to solicit large numbers of registration signatures as initially planned, let alone make the legionaries denounce the Legion of Mary. During the government's campaign against the Legion of Mary, the youth members of the Legion showed great courage when facing pressure from the government. In sum, the persistence of the legionaries and the joint effort of the clergy became key factors in defeating the communists' plan against the Legion. Mariani concluded that the Legion won their first battle and forced the government to abandon its initial policy against the Legion.

The third event is that the government's 'thought reform' attempt in Aurora University met a strong boycott and had to be abandoned. According to Mariani's account,²⁸⁵ the government organized intensive propaganda sessions in Aurora University in Shanghai. But the government's propaganda efforts met staunch resistance from the Catholic clergy and students. The clergy, the parish priests and Catholic student leaders formed a united front to cope with the communists' propaganda and indoctrination. Meanwhile, the priests in nearby parishes gave a series of sermons to strengthen the student's Catholic faith and compete with communist propaganda. The Catholic Youth organization also acted as the backbone in the student resistance. With the joint effort of clergy and students, the

²⁸⁴ Ibid., pp.91-94.

²⁸⁵ Ibid., pp.100-106.

communist regime's propaganda effort in the university was greatly hampered.

In sum, the previous literature focused mainly on the suffering and resistance of Chinese Catholics in the face of the increasing pressure from Beijing. Both Myers²⁸⁶ and Mariani report that resistance from Catholics had forced the PRC government to abandon some parts of their original plans against the church. Two arguments made by Mariani were worthy of attention here. First, Mariani claims that the CPC's efforts to interfere with the church in Shanghai 'had largely failed'.²⁸⁷ In other words, the communist setback, especially in Shanghai, should be credited to the resistance efforts of local Catholics. Second, he implies that the communist goal in interfering with the local church was to create a schismatic church.²⁸⁸ I maintain that these two arguments need closer inspection.

The first issue is how should we evaluate the alleged 'communist defeat' in Shanghai. Interestingly, according to archival evidences, even the communists themselves admitted that they 'were defeated' in Shanghai in their internal policy deliberation. (I will discuss this in detail in the next section). However, let us ask a question: would this 'defeat' have happened had the communists taken a harsher approach from the outset?

Regarding the first question, we should bear in mind that one of the central arguments of Mariani's book is that Beijing's ultimate goal of Catholic policy was to 'destroy the church'. Therefore, following this logic, the communist 'defeat' in Shanghai would be regarded as their temporary defeat in their

²⁸⁶ Myers, p.158.

²⁸⁷ Mariani, p.109.

²⁸⁸ Ibid. 'The party also failed in its goal to transform Aurora into "the intellectual and administrative center of the schismatic church in all China.'

Ibid., p.134. 'For the regime, a Catholic "schism" was a small price to pay for mastery over the Church.'

endeavour to wipe out the church. However, would the communists still be 'defeated' had they taken the harshest measures against the church at the very beginning? In fact, from previous literature we can clearly see that the pro-Vatican high-ranking priests (among which there were many foreign missionaries) constituted the backbone of 'Catholic resistance'. Once this backbone was broken, the 'Catholic resistance' would stop – this logic was well illustrated by the arrest of Bishop Kung and other prominent church leaders in Shanghai in 1955. Indeed, immediately after the arrest of these church leaders, the 'resistance' in Shanghai died down. Hence, the most effective way for Beijing to stop 'Catholic resistance' was the arrest of pro-Vatican church leaders and the expulsion of all foreign priests. In other words, had Beijing applied its iron fist to the prominent church leaders earlier (say, in 1951), the 'resistance' in Shanghai from 1952 to 1955 would probably not have happened. So why did Beijing wait until 1955 to act? Is there any reason behind that?

In fact, a closer look at Mariani's account of these historical events would reveal that the clergy in Shanghai exerted great influence on the 'Catholic resistance' from 1952 to 1955. Based on Mariani's account, it should be noticed that all the major defiance movements happened inside and around local Catholic chapels and churches. The priests were essential to these movements as they were the organizers of these church events. What they said and did during the events would have greatly affected local Catholics' views of the government.

For example, at the funeral mass for Fr. Beda Chang, 'the priests celebrated the Mass of the Holy Cross with red vestments — the liturgical colour for martyrs'.²⁸⁹ By doing so, the clergy denied the government's claim of 'death from illness' and conveyed a clear signal to local Catholics that 'Fr. Chang

²⁸⁹ Ibid., p.89.

is a martyr'. In other words, the clergy's decision to use the liturgical red colour defined Fr. Chang's demise as an act of martyrdom, which effectively put the blame on the government and rallied local Catholics to mass defiance. In another case, namely the registration of the legionaries, we can also see the crucial role of clergy leadership.

According to Mariani's account we can see that actually it was the clergy who decided whether the legionaries should register with the government.²⁹⁰ Furthermore, in all these events in Shanghai we can see the heavy presence of foreign priests. They proactively participated in these events against the PRC government. According to Mariani, a Jesuit foreign missionary, Fernand Lacretelle, celebrated the Mass for Fr. Beda Chang.²⁹¹ In Aurora University, Fr. John Havas, a Hungarian Jesuit, imbued the students with a hatred of communism.²⁹² In his sermons to students, Fr. Havas portrayed communism as the devil's work and encouraged his students not to compromise with communism. In sum, from Mariani's account we can see that the priests (local and foreign) were the leadership of this 'Catholic resistance' against the government.

If Beijing was really a reckless 'destroyer of the church' as suggested by previous literature, why did it not arrest/expel all these church leaders immediately after the expulsion of the internuncio? I believe that Beijing's unwillingness to mete out the iron fist against church leaders is worthy of careful study and discussion. In fact, based on my archival research, I argue that there was a constructivist process underlying Beijing's deliberation on Catholic policy from 1952 to 1955. During this process, Beijing closely watched both the local churches in China and the Vatican, while adjusting

²⁹⁰ Ibid., p.93.

²⁹¹ Ibid., p.89.

²⁹² Ibid., pp.101-103.

its policy according to its observations. Contrary to the view of ‘destroying the church’, I argue that Beijing’s initial aim for Catholic policy was to persuade and win over the clergy and turn the entire church into an active supporter of the government. However, due to the negative feedback from the church and Rome, Beijing’s patience was frustrated and it finally resorted to harsh methods to make the church silent. In the following sections I shall use archival evidence to support this argument.

Lu Dingyi’s Speech on Catholic Policy

In the study of international relations, figuring out a state’s ‘intention’ and ‘thinking process’ is never an easy task. However, for research taking the constructivist approach, the discussion of a state’s ‘intention’ is inevitable. In most cases, this is a guessing process where the researcher needs to deduce a state’s intention from its observable deeds. Depending on the availability of sources and materials, such a ‘guess’ could sometimes be very inaccurate. Hence, the access to quality sources is essential to a constructivist study.

The Sino-Vatican relations from 1952 to 1955 was not an easy case for a constructivist study due to the shortage of first-hand historical sources. The available sources are largely martyrdom accounts from the side of the Catholics and propaganda newspaper articles from the side of the PRC. Therefore, regarding the question ‘what was Beijing’s intention in its actions towards Rome?’ and ‘what was the rationale behind Beijing’s Catholic policy?’, previous research could only make a guess and deduce Beijing’s intention from its visible deeds. Hence, it is not strange that previous authors often draw a conclusion that Beijing aimed to destroy the church because the only material available to them was the martyrdom stories. The lack of ‘insider’s accounts’ from the side of Beijing is always a major shortcoming of previous literature in English.

In this respect, it should be noticed that Mariani did make some breakthroughs in his book *Church Militant* – he managed to get access to the Shanghai Municipal Archive and used some of the CPC's internal documents in his book. This effort should be praised. However, the government documents used by Mariani were, according to my point of view, too focused on the local level – the internal documents used by him were largely about the Shanghai local government's coercive measures against the church and do not include any nation-wide policy guidelines. In fact, I argue that this lack of state-level policy guidelines constitutes a flaw in his data collection – the detailed internal plan and report about the municipal government's attacks on the church could easily support Mariani's view that Beijing was eradicating the church, but they actually tell us very little about Beijing's rationale and 'thinking process' in carrying out these attacks.

During my days in the Hunan Provincial Archive I discovered an important document issued by the central government of Beijing on 26 Dec 1952, which will certainly give us a rare insight into the 'inner thinking process' of Beijing regarding its Catholic policy. Indeed, this document was certainly one of my most valuable discoveries in my research trip as it answers many historical questions. The document²⁹³ was a transcript of Lu Dingyi's speech on Catholic policy during a conference held by the PRC central government on religious policy. At the time of issue, this document was classified as 'top secret'. Lu Dingyi was a high-ranking official of the CPC and the head of the Publicity Department of the Communist Party of China at the time. After this conference, Lu's long speech was transcribed and sent to the local bureaus of religious affairs all over China as essential policy instructions.

²⁹³ Hunan Provincial Archive, 221-1-319.

In the speech, Lu gave a comprehensive evaluation of the situation of the Catholic Church in China and the results of government policy. This thesis will analyse his speech and summarize the main ideas into chains of equivalence. It is hoped that the analysis in this section could provide answers to the following questions: (1) What was Beijing's aim in its religious policy? (2) What was Beijing's attitude towards ordinary priests, bishops and foreign missionaries? (3) Was Beijing interested in creating a schismatic church?

Textual analysis

Thanks to its 'top secret' nature, Lu's speech on Catholic policy was strikingly different from open material on the side of PRC – he was straightforward and unreserved when talking about the central government's goal in religious policy and was very open and honest about the setbacks met by the government in dealing with the church. In the opening chapter, Lu provided an overall evaluation of the central government's Catholic policy of the previous two years. I have summarised his evaluation into the following chain of equivalence, in which his original wording was preserved as much as possible:

Chain 1: Overall evaluation

The works on the Catholic Church = based on three instructions and some supplements from the central government = obtained some results after 2 years of struggle = cracked a hole in the copper and iron wall of the Catholic Church = significantly reduced the number of imperialists in the church = obtained limited achievements but not consolidated, defeated in some areas

Lu Dingyi gave a brief review of the 'three instructions and supplements' on Catholic policy from Beijing. According to Lu's review, Beijing issued three major instructions on religious policy, the first two were on both Catholicism

and Protestantism while the third was dedicated to Catholic policy. Their main content, in Lu's original words, were as follows:

Instructions on July 1950: 'Help the Catholic Church and Protestant Churches develop, but oppose the imperialist influence on them.'

Instructions on Mar, 1951: 'Organize anti-imperialist patriotic movements within the Catholic Church and Protestant churches.'

Instructions on Jun, 1951: 'Paying attention to the difference between Catholicism and Protestantism, organize the people to expel the imperialists.'

Supplements: 'for example, the prohibition on the Legion of Mary.'

Lu reiterated that these instructions were 'still valid'. He explained how these instructions had developed over the previous two years. According to Lu, the instructions on July 1950 guaranteed the protection of religious freedom and warned that 'administrative measures used in an oversimplified and hasty manner' could not solve religious issues. The July 1950 instructions also called for a 'patriotic education' for believers. During such education, 'the focus should be on patriotism while a dispute between materialism and idealism should be avoided in order to avoid offending the religious feelings of believers'.

Lu then pointed out that the 'Wang Liangzuo Manifesto' (i.e. the *Manifesto on Independence and Reform*) changed the situation and 'cracked a hole in the copper and iron wall of the Catholic Church'. According to Lu, after Fr. Wang's manifesto, the imperialists 'launched an all-out counter-attack'. It was in such a situation that Beijing issued the March 1951 instructions. This piece of instruction conveyed Beijing's decision to initiate 'anti-imperialist patriotic movements' inside the Catholic Church and Protestant churches. Several months later, Beijing issued another piece of instruction in June

1951, and the focus of work was switched to 'expelling the imperialists'. Lu mentioned that Beijing had also issued supplements on Catholic policy, however he only mentioned the content of one supplement, namely 'the prohibition of the Legion of Mary'.

Interestingly, Lu also admitted that the government's Catholic policy was 'defeated in some areas', in other words, the aims of the government were not achieved in these areas. In saying this, Lu was referring to Shanghai. Lu depicted the Catholic Church as 'a hardened wall made of copper and iron', which expression showed his appreciation of the church's resilience and defensive capability. Here Lu made an interesting comment on the 'fighting style' of the Catholic Church: 'If you say that the Protestant churches are playing Tai Chi with us, then the Catholic Church is engaging us head-on with the Shao Lin Martial Arts.'²⁹⁴ According to Lu, the Catholic resilience came from their strict discipline and, unlike Protestant churches in China, 'there are no internal helpers (for us) within it'.

Regarding 'internal helpers', Lu took Wu Yaozong, the most prominent advocate of the 'three-self' movement in the Protestant churches, as an example and pointed out that there is no such friend of the Chinese government in the Catholic Church. Although the two-years of 'Catholic work' had already broken a hole in this 'hardened wall', Lu still thought that the government's Catholic policy had not achieved the results that had been expected. The reason, as Lu put it, was that the party 'did not give enough incentive to the people and did not win over enough members of the high-ranking clergy.' He thought that this policy weakness made the government-sanctioned 'reforms' in the Catholic Church precarious. To be

²⁹⁴ In traditional Chinese martial arts, Tai Chi and Shao Lin represent two strikingly different schools of fighting: The style of Tai Chi is soft, agile, adaptable and good at dodging the enemy's attacks; while the style of Shao Lin is hard, uncompromising and prefers head-on clashes with the opponent.

more specific, under the government's urging, the church may show willingness to reform for a short time, but before long the church would recede — Lu gave the example of Tianjin, in which previously there were 15,000 Catholics who had signed petitions for church reform, but where now only 200 Catholics remained active participants. Lu commented that this precarious situation was worsened by the church in Shanghai: 'The counter-attack from the Shanghai church sent its shockwaves all over China, and it seemed that the situation in Nanjing could not carry on until next February.' Considering the importance of the church in Shanghai, Lu gave an order that 'the fortress of the Shanghai Catholic Church must be captured.'

However, Lu also recognized the achievements of the last previous 2 years. He remarked that the number of 'imperialists' inside the church had been significantly reduced — their number dropped from 5500 to around 800. So what was Beijing's notion of these 'imperialists'? Lu's description could be summarized into the chain of equivalence below:

Chain 2: Imperialists

The imperialists inside the Catholic Church = accounting for 50% of foreign expats in China = will not leave China unless expelled = gaining struggle experience from Eastern Europe = still having the ability to counter-attack though their capability was reduced = unevenly distributed in different parts of China = using Shanghai as a fortress = using 'deprivation of religious authority' as a counter-attack weapon

The first remark of Lu was about the 'imperialists' willingness to stay in China. According to Lu, half of the expats in China at that time were 'imperialists', which referred to the foreign clergy that were deemed as hostile to the government. Lu reminded the cadres that these clergymen had already drawn much experience from Eastern Europe, where many communist states had already been established prior to the PRC. Regarding the capability of these foreign clergy, Lu thought that they were still able

to launch major attacks on the new regime despite the fact that many of them had already been expelled. Lu also commented on their distribution in China. As he put it, the majority of 'imperialists' in Southwest China had already been expelled; but a few 'imperialists' remained in the north and north-west. In East and South China, the expulsion work was largely unfinished and in Shanghai and Guangzhou the 'imperialists' still had strongholds. Lu again pointed out that Shanghai was the bulwark of 'imperialists' and the victory in relation to 'Catholic work' could only be reached after the fall of this bulwark. Lu thought that the most powerful weapon used by the foreign clergy (and certainly the Vatican) was their ability to deprive Chinese clergy of their religious authority.

Such was Lu's view of the 'imperialists'. Now let us see his opinion of other important political actors, namely the Chinese laity and the bishops. In the first place, Lu evaluated the laity of the Chinese Catholic Church, and his view is summarized into a chain of equivalence below:

Chain 3: the laity

Ordinary Catholics (the laity) = only 10% participated in the 'reform' = whose religious freedom should be protected = who should undergo patriotic education = to which not enough encouragement was given = still going to hear masses said by reactionary priests

In Lu's evaluation, the ordinary Catholics were also cold to the government-sanctioned 'reform'. Only 10% of them showed some interest, and, as Lu put it, that was already 'the most positive estimation'. Lu thought that the main reason for their lack of interest in the 'reform' was that the government was not giving them enough incentive and patriotic education. But, Lu reminded, in educating them, the officials should be careful not to offend their religious feelings by 'discussing idealism and materialism'. Lu also noticed that ordinary Catholics shunned the 'reformed priests' and still went to hear Mass said by pro-Vatican priests. Next, Lu started to examine the

Chinese clergy, who were essential to the government's Catholic policy. His main idea on bishops could be summarized into the chain of equivalence below:

Chain 4: Bishops

Bishops = (among whom) 25 reformed bishops and the vicar general, none of whom was approved by Rome = none of the bishops bearing rings participated in the reform = retaining closer ties with the imperialists and are more reactionary = holding idealist thoughts and a completely wrong view of history = extremely loyal to Rome = however the ones that we must win over = not to be imprisoned unless they are active criminals

This chain of equivalence reflected Lu's evaluation of the bishops — despite the government's efforts, virtually none of the Rome-approved bishops supported the 'reform' advocated by the government. Lu mentioned that there were only 25 bishops who were willing to cooperate with the government, but they were without Roman approval. Lu argued that the reason for their loyalty towards Rome lay in their ties with foreign clergy and their 'wrong view' of history. But, as Lu put it, the communists had to win over these bishops no matter how 'reactionary' they were. And extreme caution should be taken not to arrest the bishops. Lu warned about the danger of bishops being imprisoned: 'Catching a tiger is easy, but releasing it will be hard.' To be more specific, Lu instructed that the bishops should not be arrested unless they were 'active criminals' but did not specify which 'crimes' should be punished. Instead of imprisonment, Lu advised that the bishops should be closely watched and thought that supervision could deter the bishops from anti-government activities: 'We will see how far they can go under supervision.' For the Roman-approved bishops, Lu again ordered sternly that 'you must seek central approval before arresting any Roman-approved bishop.'

We can discern from Lu's evaluation that Beijing was very disappointed with the bishops' attitude towards the government and the government-

sanctioned 'reform'. Their antipathy towards the government and profound loyalty towards Rome deeply worried Beijing. However, no matter how unsatisfactory these bishops were, Beijing fully understood the importance of bishops and considered them essential to the government's Catholic of getting their support. Interestingly, from Lu's speech we can see that the Rome-approved bishops were also highly valued by Beijing. To be more specific, Lu's comment on bishops showed Beijing's ambivalence towards the Vatican and papal authority. On the one hand, in open publicity campaign Beijing accused the Vatican and the Pope of being lackeys of imperialism; on the other hand, Beijing secretly appreciated the value of the papal mandate and deeply regretted the fact that all of the pro-Beijing 'reformers' were without the papal mandate and there were no Roman-approved bishops who were willing to support the government's cause.

Interestingly, Lu even suggested a re-interpretation of Catholic Canon Law: 'Up to now, we still do not understand which clauses in Canon Law could be used as our weapons.' However, this suggestion of reinterpretation actually reflected Beijing's tacit recognition of the validity and effectiveness of Canon Law. In sum, Beijing was unhappy with the hostility shown by the Roman-sanctioned bishops but still wanted to rally them to the government's cause, preferably by persuasive means including reinterpretation of Canon Law.

Beside the bishops, Lu also examined the ordinary priests. His evaluation could be summarized into the chain of equivalence below:

Chain 5: Ordinary priests

Fathers = 69 participated in the reform, less than 3% of the total number = being very different from the bishops = living difficult lives following land reform = needed to receive sponsorship from the government, via the 'reform organizations' = being backward in thought and dreaming about 'the change of weather' = having 'only

Rome' (to rely upon) = should be listed according to their respective political stance and be won over accordingly

The first thing noticeable from this chain of equivalence is that Lu was also unhappy with the participation rate of local priests in the 'reform'. According to Lu, only 69 priests were willing to participate in the government-sanctioned 'reform'. Compared with the 2600 (the total number of local priests at that time according to Lu), the 'reformed' Chinese fathers were highly marginal. But Lu thought that they were 'very different from the bishops' and was confident in being able to recruit them to the government's cause. A pressing problem, as Lu put it, was that the Chinese priests were living a difficult life after land reform, during which the church property was widely confiscated and many priests in the rural area was labelled as 'landowners' and underwent harsh treatment. Lu thought their hard life was a major impediment for them in supporting the government. Hence he instructed the cadres to give financial handouts to the priests via the government-sanctioned 'reform organizations'. Besides hardship in living, Lu thought that the other reason preventing the priests from cooperating with the government was that they were harbouring the dream of a 'change of weather', (*bian tian*) an indirect term used to denote a future KMT re-capture of the Chinese mainland. Regarding how to win over the priests, Lu instructed that the local officials should study each priest's political view, categorise them into groups, and try to win over each individual with tailored strategies.

Here we can discern that Beijing was more confident in converting the local priests to the government's cause for several reasons: first, the number of priests was certainly larger than that of the bishops. And the priests' self-understanding was more varied than that of the bishops, which means that Beijing would more easily find somebody benign towards the government among the local priests with careful studies of the individual political stances of the priests; second, Beijing thought that by improving their life standard

with sponsorships, the priests' hostility would be softened and they would be more grateful towards the government; third, the stabilization of Beijing's control over the mainland would dispel the priests' dream of a KMT reconquest and therefore would make them submit to Beijing's rule. All these factors made Beijing believe that the priests were more malleable than the bishops. As a conclusion to his evaluation of the Chinese clergy, Lu pointed out that the church should be retained in China instead of being destroyed: 'If we do not win over the bishops and the fathers, that will be equal to eliminating the Catholic Church.'

After evaluating the political actors in the Chinese Catholic Church, Lu Dingyi started to examine the ongoing 'reform movement'. His overall evaluation of the 'reform movement' can be summarized into the chain of equivalence below:

Chain 6: Reform movement

Reform committees = 53 reliable ones (only 1/4 dioceses) = 11 fake ones = greatly affected by the counter-attacks from Shanghai, the situation in Nanjing was precarious = at first with great enthusiasm, but later gradually declines = proposal to build a national committee was too early = distant from the people

Lu was equally unsatisfied with the ongoing 'reform movement'. According to him, there were only 53 dioceses (25% dioceses) in China that had 'reliable reform committees', namely those trusted by the government. Interestingly, as Lu put it, there were another 11 'fake reform committees' in other dioceses, which means that the government was still suspicious of their true loyalty. Due to the low reliability of the 'reform committees', they (especially the one in Nanjing) were fragile against the counter-attack from pro-Vatican bishops and priests. Under government pressure they might show enthusiasm as a kind of façade, but when such pressure eased, the superficial enthusiasm would also fade. Lu thought that in such a situation there was no point in creating a nation-wide committee, as it was 'too early'.

Here, Lu reiterated that before creating any 'national reform committee', three prerequisites needed to be reached: (1) reliable reform committees should be established in most dioceses of China; (2) the 'reactionaries' should be shunned by the people; (3) over half of the priests should support the patriotic movement; (3) a significant number of bishops should support the movement. These instructions clearly showed that Beijing set very high criteria for the timing of setting up a national 'patriotic church', the core element of which was winning the support of the majority of both clergy and laity. Moreover, Lu paid attention to how local Catholics shunned the 'reform committees' and their negative attitude toward these organizations. He reported: 'some believers call the reform committees "committee of arrests", "police station" and "brothel"'. The reason, as he put it, was that the 'reform committees' were 'distant from the people' and the local officials failed to 'win over the backward believers'. In other words, Lu clearly defined the communist setback in Catholic policy as a failure to win over believers instead of a failure to mete out harsh punishments.

Up to that point, Lu had already given a comprehensive evaluation of the different political actors and the effectiveness of the government's Catholic policy. He then started to give orders on the guidelines and measures towards the church in the following years. The main idea of his orders could be summarized into the chain of equivalence below:

Chain 7: Guidelines and measures

guidelines and measures = (for the cadres) stop underestimating enemies, a more balanced approach = (towards the laity) the correct name and slogan; leadership of committees = (towards the imperialists) hit hard politically, refusing foreign funding, but avoid xenophobia = (towards the clergy) patiently win them over, education, sponsorship = (towards church properties) dealing with caution, changing and utilizing the seminaries

Lu prescribed specific strategies in dealing with the Catholic Church. First, he asked the cadres not to underestimate the resilience of ‘enemies’ in the church. Instead, Lu called for a more balanced approach — an approach that was neither too ‘leftist’ (radical) nor ‘rightist’ (conservative). To be more specific, Lu thought that ‘we are too ‘rightist’ on the issue of anti-imperialism and patriotism ... but overly “leftist” on the issue of protecting religious freedom.’ In other words, Lu argued that more strong measures should be meted out against the ‘imperialists’ while avoiding overly radical measures against the religious activities of ordinary Catholics.

Second, when talking about strategies towards the laity, Lu advised that the local officials should be clear about the correct name and slogan to use in pushing forward the ‘reform movement’. Lu noticed that, at that time, different names were used by local officials to denote the ‘reform movement’. Some used the name ‘Three-self patriotic movement’ and others used ‘independent reform movement’. Lu pointed out that these names, derived from similar movements in the Protestant churches in China, were unsuitable for the Catholic Church because believers will think that ‘to become independent is to be separated from Rome’ and that ‘the ones separated from Rome cannot go to heaven’.

The solution, as Lu put it, was to use the name ‘patriotic movement’ instead of ‘three-self reform’ or ‘independent reform’. The advantage of doing this, Lu argued, was that the question of ‘whether the church was separating from Rome’ could be avoided. Moreover, ‘nobody could oppose the call to patriotism, even the most stubborn elements cannot oppose it.’ However, regarding the dioceses where the wording ‘three-self’ or ‘independent’ were already in use, Lu ordered that their current names should be kept to avoid the confusion that ‘the reform is wrong’.

Furthermore, Lu criticized several slogans used in the movement. Regarding the slogan ‘striving for religious authority’, Lu said: ‘This slogan

was a bad example. We, the communists, do not want religious authority!' He then gave two more 'bad' examples:

'The slogan "striving for financial power" was also very inappropriate. Also, do not say "raising two flags, one is a patriotic flag, the other a religious flag." We do not want to raise any religious flag nor do we want to lead crusades. Say "love the country and religion" instead of "first love the country and then love religion. I repeat: just "love the country and religion" and "encourage patriotism of the clergy".'

Lu also instructed that the leadership of the 'reform committees' should be given to the laity, not the clergy because 'the laity would be more determined to oppose imperialism and they do not have the problem of 'being deprived of religious authority'.

Third, regarding the 'imperialists', Lu argued that they should be attacked politically, not religiously. Regarding 'counter-attacks' from foreign clergy, Lu instructed that the local officials must fight back. Regarding donations from abroad, Lu ordered that 'foreign money' given to the Chinese Church should be refused and to 'leave no space for the imperialists'. In this process, Lu reminded the officials that the people's struggle against imperialism was essential. "Even if the government has to come forth, it should not be regarded as a replacement (of the people's struggle)". Hence, as Lu put it, 'exhibitions, witnesses and material evidence, study sessions' were all good ways to encourage the people. To facilitate the movement, Lu suggested that local officials could help Catholics find jobs and improve their living standards during the process. Regarding foreign priests, Lu ordered the cadres to 'make a point of retaining some better, harmless ones in China.' Lu remarked that 'It is necessary to provide for them lest we give a xenophobic impression to the world.'

Fourth, regarding the clergy, Lu reminded the officials that patience was important. To win them over, Lu instructed that local government should provide for them and respect their social status. Furthermore, the officials

should carefully listen to the advice from the priests and take the correct advice. Lu noticed that the priests in the large cities had no problems in being self-sufficient, however, the living standards of the rural priests were significantly worse. Lu pointed out that ‘funding them is possible now because the financial situation (of the PRC) is improving.... the local officials should propose funding plans and send them to the central government.’

Fifth, on church property, Lu ordered that a gradual, cautious strategy should be adopted. First, part of the properties confiscated by the government before should be given back to the church. Many churches should be reopened to convince Catholics that ‘the reformed church was better than before’. Lu thought that the core strategy was to transform and utilize the seminaries. ‘We should bear in mind that seminaries are the “party academies” owned by the Catholic Church,’ Lu pointed out, ‘if we do not utilize them, there would be no priests in the future. We should encourage patriotic ones to enter, preferably the large seminaries.’ And when dealing with the properties owned by seminaries, Lu admonished that caution should be taken not to take them over in haste, which may ‘become a burden’.

At the end of the speech, regarding the prospect of Catholic policy, Lu was very confident and contended that the communists would finally gain the upper hand — ‘They have only Rome. But we have power, a government, the people, the economy and experience. We can close the door and strike the imperialists and reactionaries, just like “catching a turtle in an urn”.’

What Does this Speech Tell Us?

Due to the document’s internal nature, Lu Dingyi’s comment on and criticism of the ‘Catholic work’ of the local officials of the last two years was open and unreserved. This thesis argues that this document can answer several questions about Sino-Vatican relations of this period:

First, the document showed that ‘to destroy the church’ was not the aim of Beijing’s religious policy. Up to this point, the Chinese government was still applying its staple ‘United Front’ strategy to the Catholic Church, which means the government still wished to win over as many friends in the church as possible. In contrast to the popular and oversimplified belief that the PRC government was simply seeking the elimination of the Catholic Church, the guideline prescribed by Lu Dingyi reflected that the government was unwilling to crack down on the church with sheer state power. In other words, Beijing was still trying to transform the church to be an active supporter of the government. And to this end, persuasive means was always preferred than coercive and punitive means.

Second, from Lu Dingyi’s evaluation of the Catholic hierarchy, we can discern that Beijing had a clear understanding of the bishops’ (especially high-ranking bishops) leadership in the church. Knowing that most bishops were staunchly pro-Vatican, Beijing still instructed the local officials that ‘winning them over is indispensable’. And Beijing regarded ‘the support from over half of the bishops’ as a prerequisite for establishing a national ‘reformed committee’. (A high aim, indeed. But it showed that Beijing thought that a national ‘patriotic church’ with popular support could only be established when half of the bishops supported the government’s cause).

Third, this document reveals that, though highly disappointed by the foreign clergy, the regime still hoped to find some friendly priests among them and keep some non-threatening foreign missionaries in China. The thesis argues that the instruction to retain some foreign priests could be considered as Beijing’s genuine wish as there was no need for propaganda in such a strictly internal document. This revelation is, indeed, very different from the popular image of the regime of Beijing as an unrelenting persecutor of foreign priests. It was in accordance with Beijing’s ‘winning-over’ strategy and explains why it took such a long time for most of the foreign Catholic

priests to leave China — the government was still attempting to convert some of them to the government's cause before losing all hope in them and expelling them out of China.

Fourth, from Lu's comment we can discern that at that time Beijing was not interested in creating a church doctrinally different from the worldwide Catholic Church. Lu criticized the local cadres who gave any religious significance to the government-sanctioned 'reform movement' and reiterated that the Communist Party has no intention to act as a religious leader, nor lead any religious 'crusade'. In other words, Beijing tried to avoid the impression that the government was leading any 'reformation' or doctrinal revolution, and wanted Chinese Catholics to believe that the officially-sanctioned church was still genuinely Catholic.

To conclude, Lu Dingyi's speech, as a comprehensive and authoritative guideline of the government's Catholic policy in the late 1952, called for a *via media* approach towards the Catholic Church and argued that Catholics (especially the bishops) should be won over while arrests and imprisonment should be regarded only as the last resort. In evaluating this document, we should not forget that Lu's speech was made after the expulsion of the papal internuncio and an intense round of exchanging fire with the Vatican. With the strong tension and enmity between Beijing and Rome, Lu still called on the local cadres to stick to a cautious approach and exercise restraint in applying Catholic policy. Hence, taking this guideline into consideration, now we can understand better why there was a 'communist defeat' in Shanghai. In fact, the main reason for this 'defeat' was not because of the strength of Catholic resistance, but due to the government's unwillingness to use an iron fist against the high-ranking clergymen. Even amid great tension, Beijing still did not abandon its hope of winning some supporters among high-ranking clergy, which even includes foreign missionaries. It was only in late 1955 that Beijing gave up the hope of 'winning over' the church leadership in Shanghai and ordered its arrest. And in the next section I shall

discuss what could have contributed to Beijing's abandonment of the cautious approach as suggested by Lu Dingyi.

5.3 “Year of Mary”: How did a Religious Message Become Political? (1954)

In the last section I examined Beijing's internal deliberation on Catholic policy and discussed the relationship between Beijing's *via media* policy and the 'communist defeat' in Shanghai. However, as we can see from the subsequent history, the relationship between Beijing and Rome, between the government and the local churches, gradually became more intense. In late 1955, Beijing finally lost patience and ordered the arrests of the pro-Vatican church leadership in Shanghai. Hence, it is worth asking: what happened in the interaction between Beijing and Rome before 1955, to the extent that Beijing was led to believe that harsher measures should be used against the church?

This, again, is not an easy question to answer because there were virtually no open communications (including exchanges of fire) that occurred between Beijing and Rome over the course of two years. From an interactional perspective, this period could be considered as 'silent' as there were no observable deeds between Beijing and Rome. Hence, previous literature has largely omitted the interaction between Beijing and Rome during this period. However, the lack of observable deeds between states does not mean that no interaction happened between them. Indeed, in my archival research, I found that during these two years, Beijing had been carefully observing the Vatican and the local churches in China and adjusted its policy according to newly perceived situations. I argue that these observations were crucial to the making of Catholic policy by Beijing and scholarly attention should be given to them.

In the following part I am going to examine the Vatican's call for a 'Year of Mary' and Beijing's reaction to this papal message. I shall use archival evidence to illustrate Beijing's observations of Rome during the 'Year of Mary' and the government's evaluation of the local church's situation. It is hoped that by doing so, I can fill a gap in previous literature and shed light on the question of 'what led Beijing to abandon its previous *via media* approach'.

The Year of Mary and *Fulgens Corona*: Background

On 8 Sep 1953, Pope Pius XII issued the encyclical *Fulgens Corona*, which consecrated the year 1954 as 'the Year of Mary' — the first such year in the history of the Catholic Church. It would be helpful to give an overview of the encyclical's main content here.²⁹⁵ The message of the encyclical was largely religious as it focused on the theological development of Marian dogmas and their significance for Catholic spiritual life. Firstly, the Pope recalled his predecessor, Pius IX's *ex cathedra* definition of Mary's Immaculate Conception in 1854. Then he recollected Mary's apparition to a little girl and the miracles a century ago which occurred at the grotto of Lourdes, France, four years after Pius IX's definition.²⁹⁶ The Pope considered this apparition as a special sign from the Virgin Mary herself confirming the dogma — according to the Pope's narrative, the Virgin Mary

²⁹⁵ Pope Pius XII, 'Fulgens Corona', [The Official Website of the Holy See] <http://w2.vatican.va/content/pius-xii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_p-xii_enc_08091953_fulgens-corona.html> [accessed 15 Sep 2016].

²⁹⁶ The apparition and miracles of the Virgin Mary were reported to have happened in the year of 1858, in a grotto near Lourdes, a small mountainside town in south-western France. A poor 14-year old girl, Bernadette Soubirous, saw a vision of a young lady in the grotto. From February the lady appeared to Bernadette another seventeen times. After Bernadette revealed her experience to her parents and other people, her successive visits to the grotto attracted wide attention and many spectators. During the Marian apparitions at Lourdes, many reports of miracles appeared in that area. Despite initial scepticism, the Catholic Church soon accepted Bernadette's report of a Marian apparition as genuine.

spoke to the little girl: '*Immaculata Conceptio ego sum*' (I am the Immaculate Conception). The Pope further argued that the Marian miracles at Lourdes proved that Catholicism was the only religion sanctioned by God.

The Pope then dedicated considerable effort in explaining to readers that the dogma of Mary's Immaculate Conception, despite being defined *ex cathedra* by a Pope only a century ago, has deep roots in the writings of the early church fathers and prominent saints and theologians. He then addressed a possible challenge from non-Catholic Christians and argued that veneration of the Virgin Mary does not reduce Christ's role as the sole saviour. Afterwards, the Pope mentioned his own *ex cathedra* definition of Mary's Assumption, namely 'that the Mother of God was assumed body and soul into Heaven'. He pointed out that the definition of this dogma was 'by the supreme magisterium of the church' and satisfied the faithful's 'ardent hope'. The Pope reminded the readers of the close relationship between the dogma of Assumption and that of the Immaculate Conception and argued that the two dogmas could complement each other. Subsequently, the Pope proceeded to discuss the evils in the world at that time and argued that the root of all these evils was abandonment of belief in God. He warned that the loss of Christian faith would lead to 'hatred, envy, discord and rivalries' among people and to the disruption of social order. To avoid this situation, the Pope argued, Christian morality must be made to flourish again. Hence, he invited Catholics to apply Christian principles to actual life by celebrating the Marian Year. The rest of encyclical was dedicated to guidelines for organizing events and the encouragement of pilgrimages. At the end of the encyclical, the Pope offered his prayers for young people and elders, the church's difficulties, the future unity of the church, and world peace. He concluded the letter with his apostolic benediction.

From the main topics of *Fulgens Corona*, it could be argued that the message of this papal encyclical was not political as it was dedicated to theological discussions and religious exhortations on the theme of Marian

veneration. And it is understandable that there has been almost no academic attention paid to this encyclical's significance for Sino-Vatican relations — indeed, this encyclical did not even mention China. However, archival records show that the Chinese government paid close attention to this papal encyclical and devised plans to deal with its impact. An analysis of it will enable us to see how Beijing read the religious and political messages from the papal encyclical, to perceive the impact of the papal encyclical on the Chinese church and to understand Beijing's true feelings about Rome at the time.

The 'Year of Mary' in the Eyes of PRC Government: Beijing's Interpretation of *Fulgens Corona*

On 26 Feb 1954, the Office of Religious Affairs, Committee of Culture and Education, Government Administration Council of the Central People's Government ²⁹⁷ issued a classified circular ²⁹⁸ to the local religious bureaus regarding the papal encyclical on the Marian year. At the beginning of the circular, the author provided an overall evaluation of the Pope's recent deeds:

Chain 1: The Pope's recent deeds

The Pope = issued an encyclical and proclaimed the year 1954 as the Year of Mary = demanded that the worldwide 400 million Catholics celebrate = authorized the local bishops to grant indulgences in the Marian Year = reiterated the dogma of the Immaculate Conception and the apparition of Mary at Lourdes, France.

It is clear from this chain of equivalence that the PRC government paid

²⁹⁷ The Government Administration Council was the highest executive organ of the PRC in its first five years.

²⁹⁸ Hunan Provincial Archive, 221-1-138.

attention to all the main religious messages in the papal encyclical. This chain of equivalence reflected the government's perception of the relationship between three political actors, namely the Pope, the Catholics and the bishops. According to the wording of the document, the Pope is the issuer of the encyclical, has the power to proclaim the Marian year and to demand a universal celebration by Catholics. Furthermore, the document realized that the Pope has the authority to define church dogmas (e.g. the Immaculate Conception) and has the power to authorize bishops to distribute indulgences.

It is worthy of notice here that the document paid attention to all these aspects of papal power but did not try to challenge him in those same aspects. Instead, the focus of the document was on the side of interpretation and precaution. In other words, the point of focus was not whether the Pope had the power and authority as the leader of world Catholicism but what the implications of his religious calls would be for the Chinese Church. In other words, the government tacitly admitted that the Pope had the capability of religiously influencing Chinese Catholics, but instead of banning Catholicism in China, the state would strive to limit and reduce the effects of the papal influence that were detrimental to the regime. Regarding the Pope's call for a Marian Year, the regime tacitly acknowledged the fact that the Pope has strong influence over worldwide Catholics, including Chinese Catholics. The regime did not want to contest the Vatican over religious leadership (for example setting up a rival pope or banning Catholicism entirely), but chose to evaluate the negative impact on the regime of the Marian Year activities and to devise plans to neutralise the dangers.

Hence, Beijing's interpretation of the papal message of the Marian Year would be essential to the regime's policymaking. Now let us see how the regime interpreted the religious message in *Fulgens Corona*. The chain of equivalence below summarizes the document's opinion of the reports of Marian apparitions:

Chain 2: Marian apparitions

The apparitions of Mary = not coming by coincidence, but as the tool of the expansion of imperialism = being used by the Pope and the clergy to incite Catholics to reactionary activities = encouraging anti-communist crusades = fabricated by Catholics (under the clergy's encouragement) = promoting fake peace, expanding religious influence and concealing their reactionary nature

We can discern from the above chain of equivalence that the PRC government did not hold a positive view of the claims of Marian apparitions. The apparitions of Mary, in the eyes of the regime, were closely connected with the expansion of imperialism and reactionary activities. Why did Beijing come to such a conclusion? How did the apparitions of Mary, which was supposed to be purely religious, get a political meaning in the minds of PRC officials? The same document explained the reason for such an interpretation.

First, the document argued that in the 20th century Catholicism cooperated closely with imperialism and for this reason was called 'the best century for evangelization'. Furthermore, as the document puts it, 'in this century, the Roman Pope and his clergy often use Mary's apparitions to incite Catholics to reactionary activities at critical junctions, especially during the time between the First and the Second World War.'

Second, the document pointed out that the messages of the Marian apparitions were highly hostile towards communism. The document paid special attention to the Marian apparition at Fatima and argued that the purpose of this apparition was to help imperialism attack the Soviet Union. The document then quoted two slogans related to the Marian apparitions at Fatima ('Cracking the serpent's head' and 'the Consecration of Russia') and concluded that they were strengthening the power of anti-communist crusades. The document then mentioned the establishment of the Legion of Mary in 1921 under papal approval and pointed out that the legion was 'a

community of knights aiming at defending the Holy Mother' and its purpose was to 'organize all kinds of reactionary activities around the world'.

Third, the document argued that the Virgin Mary was close to the US Army — 'No matter where the US soldiers went, the Holy Mother was usually there, cooperating with them and giving apparitions.' To prove this, the document listed two cases of alleged Marian apparitions in the year 1948: the first one was at Lipa, in the Philippines, and the second one was in Czechoslovakia. The document reported that in the Czechoslovakian apparition, Mary was said to 'stand on the top of a tank surrounded by American soldiers and waving the American flag in her hand'. This description was regarded by the document as fabricated by Catholics under the encouragement of the clergy. Furthermore, the document also regarded the alleged 'weeping statue' at Lublin Cathedral, Poland, as an example of an 'anti-people movement' by the church. Though the document did not explain why the appearance of the 'weeping statue' in Poland was reactionary, it was clear that mass pilgrimages following the alleged miracle attracted Beijing's attention and were considered a potential challenge to the regime's stability. The fact that the church can amass a great number of people to a certain cause seemed a threat to Beijing, as it was an unpredictable force in society. After reviewing all these connotations of Marian Apparitions, the document concluded that the Pope's promotion of Our Lady of Lourdes, despite its pacifist claim, was reactionary in its core and had malicious intentions towards China.

After reviewing the Pope's call for the Year of Mary, the document started to examine the reaction of the church in China. How would the papal encyclical affect the Chinese Catholic Church? The main opinion of the document could be summarized into the chain of equivalence below:

Chain 3: The Church in China

(The Chinese Church) = secretly receiving booklets from Hong Kong containing the encyclical = re-publishing the encyclical verbatim by Kung Pin-mei, the Bishop of Shanghai, under the command of Riberi = issuing a circular written by Kung on the Year of Mary = organizing veneration activities and pilgrimages

The first thing we can discern from this chain of equivalence is that, despite the harsher political environment, the papal encyclical could still reach Chinese Catholics at that time and was circulated all over China. In sending the papal message to the mainland dioceses, the diocese of Hong Kong undertook a major responsibility by printing encyclical booklets and sending them to mainland dioceses in a secretive manner. Second, the church in Shanghai and Bishop Kung gained prominence throughout the entire Chinese church. According to the document, Kung reprinted the entire papal encyclical and sent it to his diocese. Moreover, Kung also wrote a circular, which was sent to dioceses all over China, from Fushun (in Northeast China) to Guangzhou (in South China) and was read as important guidance.

Third, the church faithfully followed the papal instructions by organizing Marian veneration activities and pilgrimages. According to the document, Catholic churches all over China organized various events to celebrate the Year of Mary, including:

(1) the opening ceremonies of the Marian Year according to the stipulation of the Vatican (on 8 Dec 1953)

(2) Penance sacraments, reciting of rosaries and prayers for sinners, especially for young people.

(3) Mass veneration of the Virgin Mary

(4) Organizing rosary recitations in front of statues of Mary from morning to night.

The document viewed these activities in a negative light and paid special attention to Bishop Kung's circular on the Year of Mary. According to the document, Kung made several appeals to Catholics, including:

(1) defining the ‘general guideline for the laity’ as ‘attaining heaven as the ultimate purpose of life’ and arguing that such a guideline can protect laity from errors and from going astray

(2) Echoing the exhortation of Mary: ‘Penance, penance, penance’ and warning that ‘without penance all will perish’

(3) a call to ‘demonstrate our faith’. ‘Faith is our glory, our comfort and reliance.’

However, the document regarded all these appeals as subversive. According to the author’s evaluation, firstly, the call for ‘heaven as the ultimate purpose of life’ was considered contradictory to the Socialist General Guidelines. Secondly, the Marian exhortation and the warning of ‘penance or perish’ was regarded as a measure to control the Chinese clergy and a threat to the ‘patriotic movement’. Thirdly, Bishop Kung’s call to faith was regarded as a ‘mind-controlling’ strategy with the purpose of utilizing believers to organize reactionary activities.

In fact, if we read from this document alone we may find that the accusations towards Bishop Kung’s appeals seemed arbitrary. Kung’s call to make ‘attaining heaven the ultimate purpose’ is an ordinary religious exhortation and could hardly be called political. The only thing that could be considered suspicious was the name Bishop Kung gave to his exhortation — ‘the general guideline for the laity’. This was, indeed, an imitation of the popular political slogan at that time: ‘the general guideline for the transitory period’.²⁹⁹ This similarity may make the officials think that the ‘Catholic general guideline’ was trying to lead the believers away from its socialist counterpart. But that accusation could still be considered too harsh –after all, Bishop Kung’s message did not directly challenge the government rule, at least not at first glance. Similarly, government officials held an equally negative view of Kung’s other appeals to Catholics and considered them as

²⁹⁹ The term ‘transitory period’ was put forward by the CPC in 1953 to denote the period where China would be transferred from the stage of ‘New Democracy’ to the stage of ‘Socialism’. Hence, the CPC’s open expression of its vision during this period was called ‘the general guidelines for the transitory period’.

subversive. Why did they think so? In fact, the official's comments on Kung's circular cannot be viewed on their own, we need to look back at the papal encyclical *Fulgens Corona*.

A Glance Back at *Fulgens Corona*

To gain a better insight into the PRC government's negative view on Kung's circular, we need to look again at the encyclical *Fulgens Corona*. In fact, Kung's circular was not an isolated text, but a response to the papal exhortations in the encyclical. In a similar manner, the government officials' evaluation of Kung's circular was also based on their understanding of *Fulgens Corona* – why, and how did the religious messages in this encyclical gain political meaning? This thesis will try to provide an answer with the analysis below.

My textual analysis was based on the version provided by the Vatican at its official website.³⁰⁰ The English version of the encyclical was subdivided officially into 48 paragraphs. I argue that the contents of paragraph 1-24 are mainly theological and distant from secular politics. But from paragraph 25, the focus of the encyclical suddenly switched to the secular world. The Pope started to denounce the evils of this world and the church's tribulations under secular governments. Indeed, the way in which the Pope elaborated on secular evils is worthy of our attention.

In paragraph 24, the Pope mentioned the Virgin Mary's suffering and praised her virtue of obeying God. Mary's words at the Marriage at Cana were quoted as an exemplar of faith: 'Whatsoever He shall say to you, do ye' (John 2:5) This absolute compliance with God's will, argued the Pope,

³⁰⁰ Pope Pius XII, 'Fulgens Corona', [The Official Website of the Holy See] <http://w2.vatican.va/content/pius-xii/en/encyclicals/documents/hf_p-xii_enc_08091953_fulgens-corona.html> [accessed 15 Sep 2016].

was also crucial to Catholic life today. So what was the situation of 'today'? The Pope argued that the situation was dire as 'men are harshly and violently afflicted and peoples and notions straitened' (Paragraph 25). The root of such a dire situation was, as the Pope put it, that people had forsaken God. From here, the Pope described the evils in the world and the church's sufferings in this world. While doing so, he also contrasted the evil and tribulation with Catholic moral teaching and suggested prayer as the remedy for evil. Here, this thesis would like to summarize the Pope's teaching (thesis) and the evil he described (antithesis) into chains of equivalence.

Chain of equivalence 'Christian faith':

Christian faith (paragraph 26) = The fountain of living water (25) = Way, the truth and the life (25) = Holy religion, Divine Majesty (27) = hope and expectation of eternal reward (27) = remedy for such great evils coming from a higher source (28) = establishing justice and charity among the classes (29) = can be productive only when actually put into practice (30)

Antithesis 'the evils'

the evils (25) = harshly and violently afflicting men and peoples (25) = originating from the forsaking of God (25) = trying to root out the Christian Faith (26) = the so-called 'glory of this progressive and enlightened age' (26) = fallacious doctrines, by which men will covet their neighbour's goods (27) = provoking hatred among classes and the shedding of blood (29)

From paragraph 25 to 30, the Pope described the characteristics of the Christian faith and the evils of this world and put the two forces in stark contrast to each other. According to the Pope, the Christian faith, namely faith in God and Christ is the fountain of living water, the truth and the life. 'Holy religion' has the right to define good and evil and religion is the foundation of laws and public authority. The Pope also pointed out that an essential component of Catholic belief is 'hope and expectation of eternal reward'. By contrast, the evil power, seeking to harm and persecute

people, originates from rejecting God. The Pope warned that such evil power was rooting out Christian faith from believers 'by cunning and secret snares'. He sarcastically pointed out that in preaching errors, the evil powers 'wantonly boast, as if they were to be considered the glory of this progressive and enlightened age'. According to the Pope, if people follow the evil power's fallacious doctrines, they will covet their neighbours' properties and attempt to grab them by violence. Under this evil power, hatred between different social classes will become rampant and there will be no more public order. To rectify such evil, the Pope argued, Christian morals must be promoted and the power from a higher source must be invoked. He pointed out that the Catholic religion could promote harmony and establish justice between the upper and lower classes. As a conclusion, the Pope reminded the reader, that Catholic belief can only be fruitful when it was put into practice — celebrating the Year of Mary was one of the best ways to practise it.

Now the Pope had described the features of the evil power and promoted Christian belief as the way to tackle it. So what was the papal advice on practicing Catholic belief in real life? The encyclical gave two instructions, namely engage in Marian Year activities and offer ardent prayers. The details of these two instructions could be summarized below:

MARIAN YEAR ACTIVITIES AS SUGGESTED BY THE POPE:

(Paragraph 31) Appropriate sermons in each diocese for the purpose of the Marian Year

(32) The Faithful should go to a local Marian sanctuary/altar to venerate the Virgin Mary

(33-34) Catholics should be encouraged to make pilgrimages to famous Marian shrines (e.g. Rome, Lourdes)

PRAYERS:

(35) that the faithful can live their lives according to Christian Commandments

(36) that young people can grow up pure and unblemished

(37-38) elders 'shine by their Christian probity and fortitude' and 'rejoice over the fruits of a well-spent life'.

(39) that the hungry, the oppressed, the exiled, the imprisoned and those separated by hatred can get justice, comfort and reconciliation.

(40) the church throughout the world may be allowed to enjoy freedom

(41-42) for the persecuted pastors, the civil liberty of the church

(43) divine consolation for the leaders of persecuted Christian communities

(44) church unity and the realization of 'one fold and one shepherd'

(46) men be united in friendly agreement under the patronage of the Virgin Mary

In *Fulgens Corona*, we can see how a supposedly neutral religious message was correlated, in a subtle manner, to secular politics. The Pope, as the leader of the worldwide Catholic Church, issued an encyclical to promote Marian veneration — an action intended to be religious rather than political. However, in the description of Christian virtues, the Pope constructed a chain of equivalence to highlight the important values of the Christian faith. But he chose to build his narrative by contrasting the virtues with the opposite 'evils'. Therefore, a chain of difference was formed and was closely interwoven with the original chain of equivalence (Christian faith).

Although the encyclical never mentioned the word 'communism', let alone 'China', the Pope's description of 'evils' led readers to think of communism — 'forsaking of God' alluded to atheist ideology; and 'coveting neighbours' goods' hints at the socialist common ownership

programs. Hence, the encyclical combined loyalty to the church with anti-communist sentiment while mixing Marian veneration with a boycott of secular policies of those governments that were led by communist parties.

Now, looking again at Bishop Kung's circular, we can easily discern its intertextual relationship with the papal encyclical and the reason why the government was discomforted by his circular. Kung's appeal to make 'attaining heaven the ultimate purpose' was an echo of the Pope's definition of Christian faith — always having hope and expectation of eternal reward. If the antithesis of 'hope of eternal reward' was defined as where people 'vehemently covet their neighbour's goods, and even take them by force as often as occasion or opportunity is given'. (para. 27 *Fulgens Corona*) Then it would be easier to understand why the government took Kung's call to make 'attaining heaven the ultimate purpose' as a challenge to the Socialist General Guidelines. The reference to the anti-communist chain of difference in *Fulgens Corona* had imposed anti-communist political meanings on Kung's religious message. Although *Fulgens Corona* also called for peace and reconciliation, these calls are far weaker than its anti-communist message and were unlikely to make any positive contribution to the relationship between the Holy See and the governments ruled by communists. Hence document 221-1-138 used derogative words to comment on the papal encyclical: '(The Pope is) promoting the Holy Mother of Lourdes to fake peace and to cover his reactionary face'.

The Church in Hunan Province and the Year of Mary

From the document issued by Beijing we can see that despite the displeasure of the PRC government, the papal encyclical, together with Bishop Kung's circular, reached dioceses all over China. How would the encyclical affect the religious life of local churches in China? How did

the local churches react to the papal encyclical and how did the local governments deal with them? And how would these local events affect Sino-Vatican relations? These questions were left unanswered by previous scholarly works because of the lack of trustable sources.

In the context of the Cold War, it was hard to get faithful information from mainland China, let alone the details of religious life of Catholic churches in the hinterland of China. The former scholarly works on this period largely depend on news reports from Hong Kong (e.g. Kung Kao Po, the newspaper owned by the Diocese of Hong Kong), and the narratives and memoirs of expelled priests and Catholic refugees. But these sources were prone to inaccuracy and subject to personal biases. Hence, besides the stories of ‘persecution’, and of the ‘tribulations in communist prisons’, can we know more about how the local priests organized religious life following the papal encyclical and how the government reacted to them? Faithful accounts of these events were not recorded by Western sources and it is also unlikely that we could find them in open newspapers published in the PRC at that time. Hence, in the following part I will disclose and analyse an internal document containing a record of church activities in Hunan Province in 1954, the Marian Year.

This document is an internal report³⁰¹ issued to the local government organs and offices of religious affairs by the provincial government regarding the situation of the ‘Year of Mary’ in Hunan and also secretive religious activities. The date of the document is 29 Jun 1954. This document can be considered as a local response to the circular 221-1-138 issued by the central government, which I have just discussed. Issued several months after the central government circular, this report is a faithful record of the government’s concern over the local church’s response to the encyclical

³⁰¹ Hunan Provincial Archive, 221-1-334.

and the strategies devised by the officials. From it we can discern how Rome's encyclical could affect local religious life and politics even in the remotest regions of China.

The report started with an evaluation of 'reactionary activities'. Let us see this chain of equivalence:

Chain 1: the reactionaries

(the reactionaries in Hunan) = receiving booklets of the papal encyclical from Hong Kong = using miracle claims to incite reformed believers to quit the reform = organizing grand masses and dispensing 'holy water' = hinting that the reformers cannot go to heaven = fabricating news about our grain policy = sabotaging the Socialist General Guidelines = Declaring May as the 'Month of the Holy Mother' and secretly recruiting participants = sending letters to Shanghai and organizing pilgrimages to Sheshan

Here, from the local officials' eyes, we can see how the Hunan clergy reacted to the papal encyclical. First, the document pointed out the clergy's source of information about the Marian Year: 'After the Roman Pontiff issued the encyclical, the *Kung Kao Po*³⁰² in Hong Kong immediately printed it in booklets and secretly sent them to the mainland. Kun Pin-mei, the Bishop of Shanghai, translated the encyclical into Chinese and sent it to all areas under the direction of Riberi.' Hence, the document attributed the reason for Marian veneration activities to foreign interference. Second, the document noticed that miracle reports of Mary became widespread in the local Catholic community during the Year of Mary. According to the document, reports of Marian apparitions outside China were widely circulated in Catholic communities in Hunan and were endorsed by the clergy.

³⁰² *Kung Kao Po* is the official newspaper of the Diocese of Hong Kong.

The document also noted that local Catholics may have helped to transfer letters from foreign missionaries to the local church concerning Marian apparitions: 'A stubborn believer in Changsha surnamed Liu circulated photos among Catholics showing a weeping statue of Mary, photos which were sent by Fr. Gabriele Allegra from Hong Kong, and transferred via Fr. Francis Tan at Guangzhou.' The document recounted the miracle narrative among local Catholics: 'Many Catholics recovered from illnesses because of the weeping statue in Sicily. The blind opened their eyes, the deaf heard, the paralyzed walked again and the dead were resurrected.' According to the document, the 'reactionaries' tried to use these miracle narratives to incite 'reformed Catholics' to quit the 'reform'.

Furthermore, as the document put it, the Bishop of Hengyang, Joseph Wan Tsu-Chang, endorsed these miracle accounts and organised 'grand masses' for them. The scale of these masses, according to the document, was very large. For example, on 18 Apr, three masses were held at three churches in the city of Hengyang, and 1300 Catholics attended these masses. The document noticed that a priest said in his sermon: 'God is the master of all things. He is the chairman of Chairman Mao.'

Third, the document noticed that the clergy were warning the pro-government Catholics that betraying the church will forfeit their salvation in heaven. For example, a local priest, Father Qian Qinghe, told the laity that 'the current world is covered by a heap of dark clouds. We should not be confused by temptations from the devil. Instead we should stand firm in our stance of sacred virtue.' In the meantime, the Bishop of Hengyang was reported to admonish the faithful: 'Jesus' disciple Judas sold Jesus, and his end was to hang himself.' While warning the traitors they could not go to heaven, the bishop also pointed out that they still had the option of penance. This was interpreted by the document as an attempt to coerce the pro-government Catholics to quit and boycott the 'reform movement' sponsored by the government.

Fourth, the document noted that priests were making negative comments about government policies. For example, a priest said: 'In Xixiang there are many people eating grass as food and many people do not even have rice for cooking porridge.' This comment was embarrassing to the government and was considered by the document as an open attack on the government's grain policy. Fifth, the document also recorded Fr. Qian Qinghe's speech and interpreted it as sabotaging the Socialist General Guidelines: 'The Holy Mother is like a compass and beacon shining upon us. On the battlefield, the best weapons to vanquish the enemy are a cannon and a machine gun. For us faithful, in order to vanquish the devil, we must pay more respect to the church and our Holy Mother.'

Sixth, the document expressed concern about the Hunan church's decision to proclaim 1st May as a feast day for the Virgin Mary. Indeed, the church's choice of 1st May angered the government as the same day was also declared an important celebration day in the PRC — the Workers' Day. The church's decision to organise masses on 1st May was considered by the officials as deliberately competing with the Workers' Day March organized by the government. The document also recorded how the officials fought back: 'Having obtained intelligence beforehand, we instructed the security squads in residential areas to systematically organize the people to participate in the mass meeting of the Workers' Day. As a result, only around 200 Catholics attended the masses organized by three churches in Hengyang, most of them are disabled, elders, women and children.' Seventh, the document paid attention to the church's attempt to organize pilgrimages to Shanghai and noticed that a number of Catholics had already started to make pilgrimages to Sheshan, Shanghai, one of the most renowned Marian shrines in China.

Facing this situation, the document gives several instructions about the handling of the Marian Year activities of the church in Hunan. Contingency plans were devised to deal with all kinds of Year of Mary activities, which

can be summarized into the chain of equivalence below:

Chain 2: Contingency plans

(contingency plans) = advising the clergymen not to lead pilgrimages = using the *hukou* (household registration) and unit leave system to forestall pilgrimages = educating and persuading the laity instead of ‘fighting head-on’ with them = limiting proselytizing activities outside churches = strengthening the investigation of secretive proselytizing by the church and their internal situation

The above chain shows that the officials deemed that the clergy were central to the organization of Marian Year pilgrimages. In their mind, there would be no mass pilgrimages if the clergy did not encourage and organize them. Hence, the officials dealing with religious affairs were instructed to ‘advise’ the clergy to refrain from organizing pilgrimages. The claimed rationale against these pilgrimages, according to the document, was ‘negative effects on agriculture production’. In dealing with the clergy, persuasion was preferred, but if the clergy were indifferent to persuasion, a warning would be given to them: ‘those persisting in organizing pilgrimages should be summoned and given a warning. Admonish them and clarify that the organizers of pilgrimages should take responsibility for all the negative outcomes of pilgrimages.’

The document also instructed that administrative measures could be used to prevent pilgrimages. Here we see the mention of two important mechanisms, namely the *Hukou* system and the unit leave system. The first one, *Hukou*, was the household registration system implemented by the PRC government. The *Hukou* documents, which made a distinction between a ‘rural household’ and an ‘urban household’, functioned as a kind of ‘internal passport’ which strictly limited migration within China, especially that from rural areas to cities. The second one, the unit leave system, reflected the nature of the command economy in the PRC at that time. In such a command economy, almost all companies, factories, farms and

organizations were controlled by the state and under close supervision. All these state-controlled entities were called 'units' and every PRC citizen was supposed to belong to at least one of these 'units'. Hence, by granting or denying leave to individual unit members, the state could exert effective control of society. The same certainly applied to Hunan — by refusing to grant leave to Catholics working in different 'units', the local government could effectively forestall any mass pilgrimages. The document then reiterated that officials should use persuasive and educative ways to deal with local Catholics and warned that 'fighting head-on like a bull with them would only make a mess.' Regarding expansion of the church, the document thought the key issue was to keep proselytizing activities under control. Namely, proselytizing should be confined within church buildings and the government should keep an eye on the content of internal preaching. At the end of the document, officials were instructed that any new information on pilgrimages and secretive proselytizing should be reported to the provincial government in time 'to facilitate investigation and response'.

What Can We Learn from the Texts?

In the above parts I have provided a detailed analysis of the papal encyclical *Fulgens Corona* and Beijing's observation of and reaction to it. The first point to be noticed is that these internal documents clearly illustrated the source of Beijing's fear. This fear came from two aspects, namely the Vatican's formidable influence in the Chinese church and the limited effect of the 'winning over' policy in the previous two years.

First, we can see how the Vatican can exert a huge influence on the church in China despite the expulsion of foreign missionaries and the papal internuncio. The papal encyclical was quickly printed into booklets and was sent to the Chinese mainland via Hong Kong. Without significant difficulties,

it reached dioceses all over China and was widely read by the local clergy. From this fact we can deduce that the communicative channel between Rome and local churches in China was not blocked at that time — not only the encyclical, but also letters from missionaries outside mainland China and the Marian miracle reports from other countries could reach the grassroots level of the church. This situation should not be attributed solely to the Vatican's efficiency in sending messages to mainland China, but also to the PRC government's policy focus. Indeed, we can still see the influence of Lu Dingyi's guidelines here — despite being unhappy with the messages sent to the Chinese Church by Rome, Beijing did not put much focus on cutting off the message channel between the Vatican and the Chinese Church, instead, the focus was still on winning over the church to patriotism.

Second, two years after Lu Dingyi's speech, Beijing's 'winning over' policy still did not have much desired effect on the clergy. Distrust still prevailed between the local governments and the clergy. From the report on the situation in Hunan we can see that the local priests were still preaching against the government-sanctioned 'patriotic movement' and hinted that the salvation of those who participated in the movement would be forfeited. On the other hand, the government also looked at the priests with suspicion. The priest's comment about Chairman Mao and the mention of an alleged famine in rural areas were interpreted politically and were regarded as expressions of defiance. The government also worried about the priests' action of organising mass pilgrimages and regarded these activities as potentially subversive.

Briefly, these things show that Beijing's 'winning over' policy did not achieve a good result among the local clergy and the priests' attitude towards the government was still less than friendly. By contrast, the government officials could have been surprised by how swiftly the Chinese local clergy responded to papal calls. Indeed, not only did the papal messages reach Hunan (a province in central China which is over 1000km from the Chinese

border) in no time, but the local clergy also tried their best to carry out the papal exhortations faithfully and organized various Marian Year activities according to the instructions of the encyclical. As we can see from the internal documents, most of the suggested activities in *Fulgens Corona* were duly carried out in the Chinese Church, even in the hinterland villages of Hunan. That clearly shows that the centrality of the Pope in the Chinese Church did not decrease despite Beijing's publicity campaigns against the Vatican.

Indeed, from the internal documents we can discern that the church leadership in Shanghai was still hugely influential in the entire Chinese Church. The circular issued by Bishop Kung was widely read by Catholics in Hunan Province (far from Shanghai) and the local church in Hunan made efforts to contact Kung. This prominence of church leadership in Shanghai was duly noted by the government and Bishop Kung's deeds were singled out in the internal documents. It can be discerned from the document that the government still tried to apply Lu Dingyi's guidelines and reiterated the idea that persuasive means were always preferred over violent ones and that officials should do their best to avoid fighting head-on with the Catholic laity. However, Beijing seemed less patient with the clergy leaders in Shanghai as the evaluation of Bishop Kung in the internal documents became highly negative. This was a sign that Beijing was losing hope in rallying Bishop Kung and other high-ranking clergymen in Shanghai to the government's cause. In fact, less than one year after the 'Year of Mary', the government finally took harsh actions towards the church leaders in Shanghai and Bishop Kung was arrested on 8 Sep 1955.

On the other hand, these documents also showed that Beijing's reading of *Fulgens Corona* and the 'Year of Mary' was overly politicised and did not take the larger religious context into consideration. Despite the fact that *Fulgens Corona* was not a papal document dedicated to China affairs, in Beijing's understanding, the Vatican's call for Marian veneration and the

entire 'Year of Mary' were no more than an anti-communist crusade and were the evidence of the Vatican's alliance with the US and the Western imperialism. In the light of this, can we say that Beijing's evaluation of *Fulgens Corona* and 'Marian Year' was fully justified? Regarding this question, it would be helpful for us to have a glance at the church's own interpretation of *Fulgens Corona*.

Not long after the issue of *Fulgens Corona*, Giuseppe Filograssi S.J., a prestigious Catholic theologian, published a detailed analysis of the papal encyclical.³⁰³ In his paper, Filograssi considered *Fulgens Corona* as the continuation of the Mariological discussion of previous papal texts, namely *Ineffabilis Deus* (Pius IX, 1854) and *Ad Diem Illum* (Pius X, 1904). Filograssi also pointed out that the Pope's defence of Marian dogmas in the encyclical was well-supported by church traditions and the Bible. Interestingly, as an authoritative analysis of *Fulgens Corona* of that time, Filograssi's paper did not mention at all the potential anti-communist meanings in the encyclical. Apart from Filograssi's theological analysis, on 4 Jan 1954, the Apostolic Delegate to the United States, Amleto Cicognani, made a speech³⁰⁴ during the annual convention of the Mariological Society of America, in which he expressed his understanding of the papal encyclical and the 'Year of Mary'. According to Cicognani, *Fulgens Corona* was the Pope's effort to confirm the Marian dogmas and encourage worldwide devotion to Mary. Similar to Filograssi, Cicognani did not touch upon the 'evils' mentioned by Pius XII. From these examples we can see that the contemporary Catholic readings

³⁰³ Giuseppe Filograssi, 'Il Dogma dell'Immacolata nell'Enciclica « Fulgens Corona »', *Gregorianum*, Vol. 36, No. 1 (1955), 3-20
<<http://www.jstor.org/stable/23570816>> [accessed 21 May 2017].

³⁰⁴ Amleto Cicognani 'Address by His Excellency, e Most Rev. Amleto G. Cicognani, D.D.', *Marian Studies*, Vol. 5 (1954), 13-18
<http://ecommons.udayton.edu/marian_studies/vol5/iss1/4> [accessed 21 May 2017].

of *Fulgens Corona* focused entirely on the theological aspect of the encyclical and did not regard the Pope's depiction of 'evils' as important.

Therefore, if one inspects Beijing's claim in comparison with the church's own interpretation, one would discover that Beijing may have exaggerated the 'threat' of the papal message and the call for Marian veneration. To be more specific, when evaluating *Fulgens Corona* and the Pope's call for the Marian Year, the officials did not care about the religious background of the encyclical while sparing no effort to 'dig out' political significance from the papal calls and connect Marian veneration with 'reactionary activities'. It could be argued that Pius XII's depiction of 'evils' in his encyclical reflected the Pope's personal anti-communist sentiment and provided Beijing with a basis for suspicion, but one should also notice that the potential political content only accounted for a tiny part of the encyclical. In other words, secular politics had never been the focus of the encyclical itself and the contemporary Catholic interpretation of it.

Beijing's politicised reading of *Fulgens Corona* was largely based on a rigid and stereotypical impression of the Vatican. In other words, the officials who were in charge of Catholic policy in the central government failed to notice the theological context of this encyclical. In fact, veneration of the Virgin Mary could be traced to the earliest days of the church; while the church's dogmatic discussions in Mariology had a history far longer than communism had. The call for veneration of Mary should not be simplified as an equivalent of anti-communism. Therefore, Beijing's interpretation of *Fulgens Corona* and the 'Year of Mary' created an arbitrary chain of equivalence connecting 'Marian veneration' with 'reactionary activities' in the central government's discourse. When Beijing's directives reached local bureaux, local officials tended to overreact by politicising religious activities and attributing subversive meanings to the speeches and exhortations made by priests. In sending such overly politicised observations of local churches back to the central government, local officials further strengthened Beijing's

distrust for the Catholic Church and the Vatican.

In sum, the entire event of *Fulgens Corona* showed how a supposed religious message was imbued with political meaning and how Beijing's rigid impression of the Vatican affected Sino-Vatican relations. From the perspective of constructivism, the event of *Fulgens Corona* illustrated the persistence of an '*a priori* definition' in Beijing-Rome interaction and the difficulty of changing it. The policymaking of both Beijing and Rome were heavily influenced by their *a priori* definitions. Under the guidance thereof, the apolitical content of the encyclical was politicised, and the mutual trust between the two states was further reduced.

5.4 The Last Round of Clashes (1956-58)

The Assessment of 'Self-consecration' in Previous Literature

The two-year period from 1956 to 1958 was a crucial period in the history of the Catholic Church in China. In this period, the church in China saw the first episcopal consecrations without Roman approval and the establishment of the national Catholic Patriotic Association (CPA). If the papal internuncio's move to Taiwan created the first deadlock in the Sino-Vatican stalemate, the self-consecrations and the creation of CPA formed the second. How do we evaluate this period? Why did the Sino-Vatican dispute over the selection of bishops end up with consecrations without papal mandates? Different observers and scholars had given different answers to these questions.

The official position of the Chinese government and the CPA regards the self-consecration of bishops and the establishment of the CPA as a triumph of the Chinese Catholic Church against imperialism. In 2000, at a ceremony for the 50-year anniversary of the foundation of the CPA, the then head of the CPA, Fu Tieshan, argued that the ‘anti-imperialist patriotic movement’ in the 1950s freed the church from her colonial past and purified the church from imperialism.³⁰⁵ Fu contended that the CPA was indispensable to the Chinese Church: ‘We can say that if there was no CPA, the Chinese Church would not have obtained the amazing achievements it has today.’³⁰⁶

In 2007, the vice-president of the CPA, Liu Bainian, pointed out that the CPA had made great contributions to the Chinese Catholic Church in several aspects. First, the CPA-led anti-imperialist patriotic movement in the late 1950s helped the Chinese Church to regain her own ‘sovereignty of management’. Second, the CPA persisted in its correct political stance while maintaining the traditional teachings of the Catholic Church. Third, the CPA saved the Chinese church from a shortage of clergy by self-consecrating bishops, when the Vatican was hostile to China and was maintaining its relationship with Taiwan. Fourth, the CPA restored the church after the Cultural Revolution. Fifth, the CPA harmonized the church’s relationship with society.³⁰⁷ Academic books published in mainland China are usually similar to the government’s stance. For example, Gu Yulu argued that the self-consecrations in the late 1950s showed that the Chinese Church truly became a church run by Chinese people. These self-consecrations, as Gu put it, were in accordance with the interests of both the Chinese people and

³⁰⁵ Chinese Patriotic Catholic Association, *The Holy Spirit is with the Chinese Church: The Fifty Years’ Outstanding Achievements of the Chinese Patriotic Association* (Beijing: China Religious Culture Publishing House, 2008), p.9.

³⁰⁶ Ibid., p.11.

³⁰⁷ Ibid., p.41.

the Chinese Church and were a 'triumph'.³⁰⁸ Regarding the future, Li Mingshu, a bishop from the official-sanctioned church, argued that the Chinese Church 'will strive to continue with self-elections and self-consecrations' even if Sino-Vatican relations improve in the future.³⁰⁹

A very representative scholarly account of this historical period from the Chinese side came from Gu Yulu, who himself was an auditor during the first conference of the Chinese Patriotic Catholic Association of the Laity (CPAL)³¹⁰ in 1958. According to Gu, the origins of the foundation of a national patriotic organization could be traced to the year 1956, when many leaders of the Chinese clergy were invited to participate in the Second Meeting of the 2nd National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC). During this meeting, many leaders of the clergy expressed their personal appreciation of the rising international status of the PRC and their pride in it.³¹¹ Furthermore, eight bishops participating in the meeting called for the foundation of a national patriotic organization whose chosen name was the 'Chinese Patriotic Catholic Association of the Laity'. Afterwards, bishops of 37 dioceses showed their support by becoming initiators of the CPAL.³¹²

On 26 July 1956, Zhou Enlai, the Chinese premier, met church leaders supporting the patriotic movement and sent Chairman Mao's regards to them. Premier Zhou's speech deeply moved the participating clergy and greatly encouraged the patriotic church leaders. On 17 Jun 1957, the

³⁰⁸ Yulu Gu, *An Analysis of Catholicism in China* (Shanghai: Shanghai Academy of Social Science Publisher, 2005), p. 210.

³⁰⁹ Chinese Patriotic Catholic Association, p.331.

³¹⁰ CPAL was later renamed to CPA.

³¹¹ Yulu Gu, p.181.

³¹² Ibid., pp.181-183.

first conference of CPAL was opened in Beijing and lasted over 50 days. At the end of the conference, the representatives passed a resolution which defined the relationship between the local church and the Vatican: 'maintaining a purely religious relationship with the Vatican without violating the national interests and dignity, obeying the Pope in terms of the doctrines that should be believed and should be followed.'³¹³ In the meantime, the Vatican was trying to sabotage the conference by any means possible, for example by forbidding Catholics to attend and denying the religious authorities of patriotic priests. Such deeds from the Vatican angered the participating clergymen, who issued a letter of protest to Rome.³¹⁴

According to Gu, in the following months, the Chinese church self-elected a good number of bishops. Before their consecration, the Chinese church sent telegrams to notify the Vatican about the oncoming episcopal consecrations — only to receive fierce denouncements from Rome.³¹⁵ From then on, the Chinese church decided to independently consecrate bishops without waiting for Roman approval. Briefly, Gu's narrative represents the typical official view from the side of the PRC. This view highlights the priests' national pride and their increasing identification with the People's Republic along the way to self-consecration. According to this narrative, the Vatican should shoulder the main responsibility for the Chinese church's decision to consecrate bishops without a papal mandate.

In stark contrast to the PRC government's official stance and the accounts offered by scholars from mainland China, authors on Sino-Vatican relations from outside China generally hold highly critical views about the self-

³¹³ Ibid., p.198.

³¹⁴ Ibid., p.196-197.

³¹⁵ Ibid., pp.202-203.

consecrations in the late 1950s and the foundation of the CPA. Ladany, the Jesuit father who wrote the earliest English book dedicated to Sino-Vatican relations, viewed the self-consecrations in the late 1950s and the CPA in a negative light. He argued that the self-consecrations and the foundation of the CPA were steps to make 'a Catholic church completely subject to the Party'.³¹⁶ Myers, who held the view that the PRC government's ultimate aim was to destroy the church, echoed Ladany's view that self-consecration from 1957-58 was a 'fait accompli' presented to Rome. Myers also pointed out that these self-consecrations occurred after 'ten years of bloody and bitter persecution of Catholics in China.... Thousands of Catholics had been brutalized, tortured, and executed.'³¹⁷ In other words, the self-consecrations and the foundation of the CPA was part of the persecution carried out by the PRC government. Mariani, who also viewed the PRC government as the ruthless persecutor of the Catholic Church, saw self-consecration and the creation of the CPA as the government's attempt to build a puppet church.³¹⁸ According to Mariani, such an attempt was part of the government's plan to eliminate the Catholic Church in China. Mariani argued that the arrest of Bishop Kung and other church leaders created a power vacuum in the church, which enabled the government to find some compromised clergymen and set up a puppet church.

Both Myers and Mariani's argument were based on their claim that the PRC government's ultimate aim was to destroy the Catholic Church. To support this claim, both authors³¹⁹ provided as evidence a document alleged to be issued in 1959 by Li Weiham, the head of the United Front Work Department of the CCP. According to the two authors, the so-called 'Li Weiham

³¹⁶ Ladany, p.23.

³¹⁷ Myers, p. 203.

³¹⁸ Mariani, pp.169-185.

³¹⁹ Mariani, pp.201-205. Myers, pp. 205-207.

document' was intended to be sent to the Communist Party of Cuba as advice on Catholic policy. According to Mariani, the document defined the Catholic Church as a 'reactionary organization, the source of counterrevolutionary activities' and clarified the government's aim as the ultimate destruction of the church: 'to destroy the Catholic Church. This is the objective we aim to reach and it is for this that we struggle.'

According to both authors, the Li Weiham document advocated for a step-by-step approach to destroy the church. First, the state should create the Bureau of Religious Affairs to put religion under its control while the church should be divided into 'counterrevolutionaries' and those who oppose them. Second, the 'unpatriotic elements' of the church should be purged and the link between the Holy See and the Chinese Catholic Church should be severed. Third, the entire clergy should be subjugated to the government's will. The desired outcome in this alleged CPC document was: '...when the practice of religion becomes no more than an individual responsibility, it is slowly forgotten. New generations will follow the old, and religion will be no more than an episode of the past, worthy of being dealt with in the history of the world communist movement.'³²⁰ As a conclusion, Myers made the following statement:

'It is much more difficult to argue, however, based on this rather clear documentary evidence (combined with ample historical evidence as well), that the aim of the People's Government was merely control and regulation, and that had the Catholic Church been more flexible or conciliatory it might have achieved some sort of accommodation or *modus vivendi* with the new communist governors of China after 1949.'

This thesis disagrees with Myers and Mariani's view that the PRC government had always been seeking to destroy the church. Indeed, I argue

³²⁰ Myers, p.207.

that such a rigid viewpoint held by the two authors had led to their oversimplified evaluation of the PRC's Catholic policy. Both authors made references to the 'Li Weihai documents' to support their argument that the PRC's ultimate aim was to destroy and eliminate Catholicism in China. However, this thesis argues that the so-called 'Li Weihai document', even if it was genuine, did not reflect the CPC's normal Catholic policy in most of the 1950s. The alleged 'Li Weihai document' was issued in 1959 – that was after the start of the Great Leap Forward when the PRC general policy was greatly radicalized. During the Great Leap Forward, the PRC government discarded its previous gradual, prudent policies of the early 1950s and opted for overzealous social development plans. The documents issued during this period were marked by unrealistic aims and over-optimistic slogans. Hence, the 'Li Weihai document' should be regarded as an abnormality, rather than a truthful reflection of the CPC's more prudent Catholic policy for most of the 1950s. Even if we acknowledge that the 'Li Weihai document' reflected the CPC's negative perception of the Catholic Church as a 'reactionary organization' in the late 1950s, such a sentiment was the result of long-term mutual identity construction, not the cause. In sum, I argue that the 'destruction' view held by Myers and Mariani is anachronistic, oversimplified and therefore deeply flawed. A study on Sino-Vatican relations without consideration of the identity-articulating process and the impact of interactions on policymaking would be highly one-sided and unhelpful to a rational understanding of the Beijing-Rome relationship.

Key question: Did Beijing Genuinely Seek Roman Approval?

As we see from above, the accounts offered by the side of the PRC and by Western scholars are radically different. The Chinese official accounts often lay the blame on the Vatican's anti-PRC stance and Rome's disregard for the Chinese Catholics' patriotic sentiment. By contrast, accounts outside

mainland China often highlight the government's interference in the election of bishops and Beijing's enmity towards religion together with its effort to control the church. However, as this thesis maintains, we should not ignore the implications of Beijing-Rome interactions on the outcome of these historical events. Hence, when evaluating the Chinese Catholic Church's 'self-consecrations' in the late 1950s, two questions related to Beijing-Rome interaction are essential to our understanding of these historical events – did Beijing seek Roman approval before these consecrations? How did Rome respond to Beijing's gestures?

In discussing the communication between the Chinese Church and Rome before the self-consecrations, accounts from both mainland China and the West had noted that there were telegram exchanges between mainland China and Rome regarding the selection of bishops in three areas, namely the Shanghai Diocese (1956) and the Hankou and Wuchang Dioceses (1958). The outline of the two events is thus:

- (1) In 1956, the priests of Shanghai Diocese elected Fr. Francis Zhang Shilang as the vicar capitular of Shanghai. On this matter, the Shanghai Diocese sent telegrams to the Propaganda Fide seeking papal endorsement. However, Rome refused to endorse Fr. Zhang as the legitimate vicar.
- (2) In 1958, the local churches of Hankou and Wuchang elected their own bishops. Before the self-consecration of the two bishops, a telegram was sent in the name of the two dioceses to Rome notifying the Vatican about the oncoming consecrations. Rome replied with a severe warning that these self-consecrated bishops would be excommunicated.

As we can see, the courses of the two events were very similar. First, all these dioceses were leaderless at that time because their foreign bishops had already been expelled from mainland China. Second, in both cases,

telegrams were sent to Rome in the name of the local church regarding the selection of new bishops. Third, Rome gave negative replies to these telegrams and refused to endorse the proposed candidates. The accounts from both sides agree with each other in the basic historical facts but disagree in the evaluation of these facts.

The Chinese sources often stress the harshness of the Vatican's replies and its deep hostility towards the priests friendly to Beijing. For example, Yan argues: 'the Roman Curia did not care much about the real needs of the Church in China and continued its anti-new government policy that could only be offensive to patriotic Chinese clergy and laity.'³²¹ Gu argues that the Chinese Church's action of sending a telegram to Rome was an attempt to apply the principle of 'obeying the Vatican in the religious creeds that should be believed and should be carried out'.³²² Gu holds that the Vatican refused the Chinese Church's requests 'unjustly'— the reply telegram sent by the Vatican defined the consecrations as 'invalid', 'useless' and 'equal to nothing'. Such wordings, according to Gu, were blackmail towards the Chinese clergy.³²³ Gu argues that the Vatican's excommunications of Chinese priests infringed the Chinese church's self-governing rights:

'Excommunicatio specialissima reservata is a religious punitive measure in Catholicism. It was only used to punish those who committed grave sins. And only the Pope could forgive such grave sins. However, the priests in Hankou and Wuchang were exercising their lawful rights to run the church autonomously, so how could that be considered a sin? The Chinese clergy refused to be bullied by the *Excommunicatio*. By contrast, they saw clearly the true face of the Vatican – trying to control the Chinese church by religious authority to serve its political aim of opposing the New China.'³²⁴

³²¹ Kejia Yan, *Catholicism in China* (Beijing: CICC Publishing House, 2004), p.122.

³²² Yulu Gu, p. 202.

³²³ Ibid., pp.203-204.

³²⁴ Ibid.

On the other hand, previous scholars who wrote in English often question Beijing's intention in sending these telegrams to Rome and regard these gestures as insincere and lacking in goodwill. For example, Ladany was strongly against the view that the Sino-Vatican relationship could be better had the Vatican been friendlier towards Beijing in the selection of the bishops of Hankou and Wuchang. Instead, he argued that the Holy See did make the right choice in refusing to endorse the candidate elected as bishop and recommended by the clergy in mainland China.³²⁵ Regarding the criticism that the Holy See had not consecrated enough local bishops in mainland China before 1949, Ladany argued that the localization process had already started, as evinced by the consecration of Chinese Cardinals. It was the PRC government who disrupted this localization process.³²⁶ Another scholar, Myers, also took a similar standpoint. He argued that Beijing sent cables to Rome as 'a test of strength' instead of as a means of consultation.³²⁷ According to Myers, due to Beijing's lack of sincerity, 'it is difficult to see how Pius XII could have acted differently than he did.' Myers argued that Beijing did not have any intention to improve Sino-Vatican relations: 'Nor, as suggested above, does it appear at any point during this period, that such was the desire and intention of the Chinese authorities.' Mariani also offered his evaluation of Beijing's 1956 telegrams to Rome. Regarding the selection of Fr. Zhang Shilang as the episcopal candidate and the telegram sent to Rome on this matter, Mariani viewed it as a deliberate 'fait accompli' presented to the Holy See. According to Mariani, the government's choice of Fr. Zhang Shilang was only because Fr. Zhang was pliable and submissive enough to the government.

³²⁵ Ladany, p.24.

³²⁶ Ladany, p.26.

³²⁷ Myers, p.203.

As we can see, Ladany and Myers held negative opinion towards Beijing's act of sending telegrams to Rome. But why did they come to such a conclusion? First and foremost, the two authors derive Beijing's intention from its previous acts. Let us consider Ladany's rationale for his evaluation of Beijing's intention in sending the telegrams. First, the PRC government had been promoting anti-Vatican church reform since 1950. Second, it was the PRC government who arrested the church leaders and expelled the foreign missionaries. Third, the PRC propaganda had demonized the Vatican for a long time.³²⁸ Hence, Ladany argued that the intention of the letter to Rome was malevolent, with the purpose of sending a 'fait accompli' to Rome — it was the PRC government who should be blamed for Rome's refusal. In other words, according to Ladany's reasoning, Beijing's intention to send these telegrams could only be considered malevolent after the PRC government did so many wrongs to the church in China. Myers also uses a similar rationale and argues that Beijing had no sincerity in consulting Rome because the telegrams to Rome happened in the context of 'ten years of bloody and bitter persecution of the Catholics in China'.³²⁹ He then used the so-called 'Li Wei-han Document' to support his negative reading of Beijing's telegrams to Rome.³³⁰

Secondly, in previous English literature on Sino-Vatican relations, the judgments of Beijing's intention were often based on extremely limited original material. For instance, in his book, Myers did not mention the 1956 telegrams at all while pointing out that the 1958 ones were inaccessible to him.³³¹ When Mariani mentioned the 1956 telegrams sent by Beijing to

³²⁸ Ladany, p. 25.

³²⁹ Myers, p.203.

³³⁰ Ibid., pp.205-207.

³³¹ Ibid., p.171. and p.200.

Rome, he quoted only two sentences from the original telegram, which reads: '*Bishop Kung Pin-mei has been arrested by the government because of treason. According to Canon 429, article 3, we have made Zhang X X the acting bishop.*'³³² Based on these sentences alone, Mariani reached his conclusion that Beijing's act of sending such a *fait accompli* to Rome was just 'bold power play'.

Is the sentence quoted by Mariani the only content of these telegrams, or, could it represent the main message of these telegrams? In fact, Chinese sources give us a far more nuanced interpretation of these telegrams than those given in Mariani's book. The *Shanghai Chronicle of Religion* shows a far more vivid picture of interaction between the local church and the Vatican regarding Fr. Zhang's election as the vicar of Shanghai. Below is my summary:³³³

Communications between the church in Shanghai and Rome: A Timeline

(According to the *Shanghai Chronicle of Religion*)

16 Mar 1956 The committee consulted people in the Shanghai Diocese and elected Fr. Francis Zhang Shilang as the vicar capitular

21 Mar 1956 The head of the committee, Fr. Xu Yuanrong, sent a telegram to the Propaganda Fide notifying Rome of the election of Fr. Zhang

27 Mar 1956 The Propaganda Fide replied to Fr. Xu, confirming Bishop Kung's authority and refusing to recognize Fr. Xu as vicar capitular

³³² Mariani, p.171. The wording 'Zhang X X' was retained as in Mariani's original quotation. According to Mariani, the original document in the archive left out Fr. Zhang Shilang's full name.

³³³ Editorial Committee of the Shanghai Chronicle, 'Chapter Six: The Anti-Imperialist Patriotic Movement and the Efforts to Run the Church Independently' in *Shanghai Chronicle of Religion*, (Shanghai: Editorial Committee of the Shanghai Chronicle, 1999) <<http://www.shtong.gov.cn/node2/node2245/node75195/node75203/node75287/node75301/userobject1ai92012.html>> [accessed 15 Sep 2016].

23 Apr 1956 Fr. Xu sent another telegram to Rome, providing more details and seeking approval

7 Mar 1957 The Propaganda Fide replied to Fr. Xu with a letter after 10 months. The letter reiterated that Fr. Zhang's election was illicit and insisted that the successor appointed by Bishop Kung should be the legitimate vicar capitular.

17 Mar 1957 Fr. Xu sent a letter to Propaganda Fide persuading Rome to recognize Fr. Zhang

31 Mar 1957 Fr. Zhang, the elected vicar capitular himself sent a letter to the Propaganda Fide explaining his motives behind the election and seeking Roman approval

10 Jul 1957 The Propaganda Fide sent the final telegram reaffirming its denial of Fr. Zhang's legitimacy.

22 Jul 1957 The clergy in Shanghai issued an open letter, bitterly accusing the Vatican of 'unjustly destroying the Shanghai diocese'.

Although the *Shanghai Chronicle of Religion* described the timeline of telegram exchanges between Beijing and Rome, it only includes two fragments of the original wording of the telegrams/letters. Interestingly, the first fragment quoted by the *Shanghai Chronicle*, which was from the first telegram sent by Fr. Xu to the Propaganda Fide (21 Mar 1956), reads exactly the same as in Mariani's quote. However, the *Shanghai Chronicle of Religion* includes a second fragment, which was not mentioned in Mariani's book. It is a part of Fr. Zhang, the elected vicar capitular's, explanatory letter to Rome, which reads:

'As I ponder over the fact that I am already at the age of 77 – old, decrepit and useless – my inner nature urges me to shun such a daunting task. But after serious consideration before God, I decide to accept this bitter task in both the interests of laity and the needs of our diocese. I hope that I can still serve the church in my remaining days; and that my self-sacrifice could bring God's blessings to our diocese.'³³⁴

³³⁴ From *ibid.* My own translation from the original Chinese.

From the timeline and the second fragment offered by the *Shanghai Chronicle of Religion*, we can see that the entire course of the communications between Beijing and Rome was far more complex than has been described by Mariani. Indeed, what Mariani quoted was from the first telegram sent by Fr. Xu to the Propaganda Fide (21 Mar 1956) because the *Shanghai Chronicle of Religion* recorded exactly the same sentence and specified its date. But Mariani did not mention at all the subsequent letter exchanges between Beijing and Rome. In reality, over a period of two years, Beijing (in the name of the Shanghai Diocese) exchanged three rounds of telegrams/letters with Rome regarding Fr. Zhang's election as the vicar capitular of Shanghai.

The fact that Mariani omitted these exchanges altogether could be considered a major flaw in his account of this event. So what could contribute to this omission? It could be argued that the scarcity of the original material is an important factor. Even to this day, access to these original telegrams/letters between Beijing and Rome was restricted and the published books and articles do not contain much of the original wording of these telegrams and letters except for the two fragments mentioned above. So it may be understandable that Mariani drew a swift conclusion from merely two sentences. However, Mariani's omission of the second fragment as quoted in *Shanghai Chronicle* is less excusable. The second fragment, long published in Chinese sources, deserves attention no less than the first one. In fact, as we can see, not only was the second fragment longer than the first one, but also it was very different from the first one in its style and mood. The omission of the second fragment would certainly lead to unbalanced report. Indeed, the language of the second fragment was soft and religious in tone and therefore unhelpful in depicting Beijing as a reckless destroyer of religions – perhaps that was the reason why Mariani did not include this second fragment in his book.

In sum, previous scholarly accounts written in English about communication between Beijing and Rome before the 1958 self-consecrations are flawed. The result is an unbalanced evaluation of Beijing's intention and the oversimplification of the entire event. Here is the gap which this thesis attempts to fill. In the following part, this thesis will try to provide a new insight into the impact of Beijing-Rome communications on Sino-Vatican relations, based on analysis of the original documents and texts from the side of the PRC government. Based on archival evidences, the thesis will discuss the three questions:

(1) What was Beijing's goal in Catholic policy before the 1958 self-consecrations?

(2) Had Beijing genuinely sought Roman approval before the self-consecrations and how did Rome reply?

(3) How did Beijing-Rome communication affect Beijing's decision-making?

The Church and State in Czechoslovakia as Described by Fr. Plojhar: Beijing's Ideal World

This thesis now touches upon Beijing's aim in its Catholic policy before the 1958 self-consecrations. Again, this thesis challenges the claims of Myers and Mariani that Beijing's aim in its Catholic policy before 1958 was the utter destruction of the church. Both authors cited the 'Li Wei-han document' as strong evidence of Beijing's intention to destroy Catholicism. However, on this issue, this thesis argues that the so-called 'Li Wei-han document', issued in the political turmoil of the Great Leap Forward, could not represent Beijing's aim in its Catholic policy before 1958. In my research in the Hunan Provincial Archive, I did not find any evidence during this period to show that Beijing aimed to exterminate the Catholic Church in China. In fact, in

previous sections, I have argued that Beijing's principle goal in Catholic policy from 1952 was 'winning over the church', which was evidenced by Lu Dingyi's guidelines. However, this 'winning over' policy did not achieve many of the effects desired by Beijing and the government and the clergy were still in a state of mutual distrust up to 1954. The loyalty towards Rome shown by the high-ranking clergy in Shanghai and the hidden anti-communist calls conveyed by the papal messages convinced Beijing that the clerical leadership in Shanghai should be dismantled.

Hence, it could be argued that the arrest of Bishop Kung and other prominent church leaders in Shanghai in September 1955 marked a serious turning point in Beijing's Catholic policy. However, does it mean that after the arrests of church leaders in Shanghai, Beijing had switched to an eradication policy, as suggested by the alleged 'Li Weihuan document'? I argue for a 'no' answer. In fact, archival evidence shows a far more nuanced picture of Beijing's policymaking than that described by Myers and Mariani. So what was Beijing's goal in Catholic policy before the 1958 self-consecrations? In this section I shall analyse an internal document issued by Beijing to local bureaus of religious affairs all over China – it will shed light on Beijing's policy aims in 1956, right before the Beijing-Rome clashes over the episcopal consecrations.

On 3 Jul 1956, the Bureau of Religious Affairs at the State Council issued a document about the visit to China of Josef Plojhar, the head of the Ministry of Health in Czechoslovakia. Plojhar visited Beijing again on 7th May of the same year in his capacity as the Minister of Health in Czechoslovakia and the leader of the People's Party. However, besides his official functions, Plojhar was also invited to give a lecture on church-state relationships to the local clergy in Beijing – an arrangement highly unusual for a foreign minister visiting China. (Considering Beijing's usual suspicious attitude towards foreign religious interference at the time, this invitation was even more interesting.)

The fact that Fr. Plojhar was invited to speak to local clergy is clear proof that he was trusted by Beijing and the government believed that his lecture could help the government in state-church relations. So what did Fr. Plojhar say during his lecture? While the open publications did not reveal any detail of this lecture, the Bureau of Religious Affairs at the State Council put the key points of Fr. Plojhar's lecture into an internal circular³³⁵ and sent it to local religious affairs offices in each province. Hence, Fr. Plojhar's view of state-church relationships could be considered as being endorsed by Beijing. So what is the major content of his speech and what did he convey to the Chinese clergy? I have summarised the key points of Fr. Plojhar's speech into the following chains of equivalence:

Chain of Equivalence: The church in Czechoslovakia

The Catholic Church in Czechoslovakia = enjoying complete freedom of belief = cooperating full-heartedly with the government = collaborating with the Communist Party without violating church discipline, creeds and canon law = acknowledging the Pope's status as the head of the church and submitting absolutely to Roman leadership in terms of creeds and canon law = putting our country's interests first and refusing to be influenced by the US via Rome = never seeking schism = fighting selfish interests, colonialism and the danger of a third world war

From this chain of equivalence, we can perceive that Fr. Plojhar described an ideal picture of the relationship between church and government, and between the local church and Rome. First, Fr. Plojhar claimed that the church in Czechoslovakia enjoyed a high degree of religious freedom. To persuade his audience, Fr. Plojhar used himself as evidence. 'Catholics have complete religious freedom and do not meet any obstacles. My current position as the Minister of Health is strong proof of this.' Not only was the church enjoying freedom of belief in Czechoslovakia, but, as Fr. Plojhar put

³³⁵ Hunan Provincial Archive, 221-1-41.

it, she was also having a good relationship with the government: 'We and the government cooperate with each other full-heartedly and respect each other's beliefs.' Here, it was clear that what Fr. Plojhar meant by 'respecting each other's beliefs' was that there was mutual respect between Catholicism and state ideology.

Second, Fr. Plojhar touched upon the church's relationship with Rome and voiced his belief that collaborating with the Communist Party did not mean a compromise of church discipline and canon law. He revealed that he had tried to consult Rome on this matter: "In 1949 I went to Rome and discussed with the clergy in Rome the issue of collaborating with a communist government. We quarrelled with each other ... but they did not give me any answer in the end.' For the future, Fr. Plojhar was confident: 'Today, the number of those who oppose us is diminishing while the number of our supporters is increasing day by day.'

Third, Fr. Plojhar affirmed papal primacy and stressed that the Czechoslovakian church was subject 'absolutely' to the Pope's authority regarding religious creeds and canon law. As an example, he said: 'On the Holy Father's birthday this year, we sent letters and telegrams to congratulate him. And the Holy Father also replied to us and thanked our bishops, friars and nuns. Religious decrees from Rome were also published in newspapers and magazines in Czechoslovakia. The Pope's views against the combative usage of atomic weapons was also supported by us.'

Fourth, Fr. Plojhar clarified the Czechoslovakian church's stance on political issues, namely that the local church should prioritize national interests and refuse to be influenced by the US through the Vatican. The reason, as Fr. Plojhar put it, was that the Vatican was supporting American imperialism in politics and was receiving cash aid from the US. So what was the Vatican's attitude towards the church in Czechoslovakia? Fr. Plojhar said: 'The

Vatican opposes communism. They would not openly agree with us when we do the right things. The best thing they could do is to keep silent.'

Fifth, Fr. Plojhar stated the stance of his local church on church unity: 'We are not seeking schism and will never do so.' He pointed out that a radio station was built in the Vatican to broadcast to Czechoslovakia in the Czech language, 'defaming (us) and trying to divide the unity between the government and the church.' According to his account, in 1952, Fr. Plojhar visited Rome to find out the truth: 'I finally discovered that those who did this were not the Pope, nor the cardinals, but some people politically influenced by the US inside the Vatican and reactionaries who had fled from Czechoslovakia. It was they who accused us of schism.' Lastly, at the end of his speech, Fr. Plojhar illustrated the three tasks of the church in Czechoslovakia, namely: fighting selfish interests, opposing colonialism in Asia and Africa, and campaigning against the possibility of a third world war. Fr. Plojhar concluded his speech with a strong denouncement of warmongers: 'Those warmongers who want to launch new wars, let them be cursed!'

How should we see church-state relationships in Czechoslovakia as described by Fr. Plojhar? We could say that the picture depicted by Fr. Plojhar was highly idealized in which the state, the local church and the Vatican coexisted peacefully. However, it could be argued that the actual relationship between the Vatican and the officially-sanctioned church in Czechoslovakia was less peaceful than the description of Fr. Plojhar. Similar to China, the Czechoslovakian government and the Vatican contested with each other on various aspects of church life, including the appointment of priests, church institutions, church publications, the link with Rome and the monastic life — as part of the conflict, Fr. Plojhar was excommunicated by the Vatican in 1949 due to his pro-government

stance.³³⁶ But no matter what the state-church relationship in Czechoslovakia really was at that time, Fr. Plojhar's lecture in Beijing, as a speech aimed at educating the Chinese clergy, spoke more about Beijing's desire than the actual situation in Czechoslovakia. In other words, as a friend trusted by Beijing, Fr. Plojhar's speech was regarded by Beijing as a persuasive account of the ideal relationship between church and state in Beijing's understanding. The intended audience was the Chinese clergy and the actual situation in Czechoslovakia was less important – in this respect, Fr. Plojhar's account of state and church relations in Czechoslovakia is very similar to Fr. Matthew Chen's *Holy and Catholic* in that both texts depict a highly idealized vision, regardless of the actual situation in the world.

In this ideal picture of state-church relationships endorsed by Beijing, harmony was realized between state interests and church interests. Instead of challenging the communist party's rule and competing with the state ideology, the church becomes a supporter of the state. In return, the government respects the church's discipline, canon law and creeds and allows the church to be in communion with Rome. Members of clergy could even be accepted into the decision-making process of the state, as shown by Fr. Plojhar's position as Minister of Health. Despite the radical differences between the belief system of Catholicism and communism, the state and church could still cooperate in various fields. As noticed by Fr. Plojhar, the possible fields of cooperation could be in the area of social justice, and the struggle against colonialism and wars. It is worthy of notice that at the time when Fr. Plojhar delivered his speech to his Chinese audience, he was already excommunicated and defrocked by the Vatican. However, in his speech we did not see strong accusations against the Vatican apart from the criticism that the Vatican followed US imperialism.

³³⁶ Gerhard Besier and Katarzyna Stoklosa, *European Dictatorships: A Comparative History of the Twentieth Century* (Newcastle: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2013), p.309.

Instead, Fr. Plojhar stressed his church's loyalty towards the Pope and reiterated that schism was not an option.

When talking about papal primacy, Fr. Plojhar used the wording 'submitting absolutely to Roman leadership' in terms of creeds and canon law. Regarding Rome's offensive gestures against Czechoslovakia, Fr. Plojhar exonerated the Pope and the cardinals and laid the blame on imperialists and exiles from Czechoslovakia. When commenting on the Vatican's attitude towards the church collaborating with the Czechoslovakian government, Fr. Plojhar predicted that the Vatican might not express open support but may instead remain silent. In sum, despite the fact of his being an excommunicated priest, Fr. Plojhar's speech still respected papal primacy and canon law, while exempting the Pope and the cardinals from blame. Instead of open support, he only expected the Vatican to remain silent. Therefore, as a speech endorsed by Beijing, we can also deduce Beijing's attitude on the same issues: despite the Vatican's long-time anti-communist stance, the state and the church could still seek peaceful coexistence if the Holy See did not encourage Catholics to boycott the communist party. If the harmony of interests between the two parties could not be realised in a short time, silence from the Holy See would be helpful in improving mutual relationships. Furthermore, Beijing, in endorsing Fr. Plojhar's speech, still wished to respect papal primacy in the church and canon law. That the blame should be laid on a group of imperialists inside the Vatican instead of the Pope and the cardinals also left the possibility of reconciliation between the Chinese state and the Vatican leadership.

So what kind of conclusion could we draw from Fr. Plojhar's depiction of state-church relations? Indeed, unlike Lu Dingyi's speech in 1952, Fr. Plojhar's speech does not include any systematic discussion of state policy nor any detailed guidelines. However, it does tell us some important things. First, Beijing's action in inviting Plojhar to give such a speech to the Chinese clergy showed that up to that point the government had not abandoned its

hope of ‘winning over’ the clergy. The speech was clearly intended to be a persuasive account to rally the clergy to the government’s cause and give them hope that church and state could coexist and collaborate in a state ruled by communists. In other words, after the arrests of church leaders in Shanghai, Beijing did not abandon the moderate line, as suggested by Lu Dingyi – this is in stark contrast to Myers and Mariani’s claim that Beijing was aiming to exterminate the church.

Second, as I have argued, that instead of a faithful description of the real situation in Czechoslovakia, Plojhar’s depiction was actually Beijing’s utopian vision in which state and church have a *modus vivendi*. Following the speech’s logic, as long as the church could align herself with the government politically, the government would respect the church’s beliefs and dogma, including its spiritual ties with Rome. In its utopian tendency, it could be argued that the speech of Plojhar is similar to Matthew Chen’s *Holy and Catholic*. However, Matthew Chen’s ideal world was one in which state and church have clear boundaries and do not interfere with each other; while the one depicted by Plojhar was marked by the friendly collaboration between state and church along political lines.

Last but not least, the speech shows that papal primacy and canon law were still acknowledged in Beijing’s discourse. In his speech, Plojhar mentioned many times the relationship between Rome and the church in Czechoslovakia and expressed the local church’s obedience to the Pope in terms of religious issues. This is evidence that Beijing was still willing to solve the government’s conflict with the church within the limits of papal primacy and church laws – indeed, this is in accordance with Lu Dingyi’s suggestion in 1952 that the church’s canon law could be re-interpreted to solve the state-church conflict. In sum, the acknowledgement of papal primacy and canon law in this document shows that Beijing still wished to solve the Catholic issue within the Catholic framework, namely the church’s own traditions and regulations. To put it very briefly, the *via media* policy

guidelines prescribed by Lu Dingyi were still at work in 1956. And we shall see how Beijing's Catholic policy would be adjusted by Beijing-Rome interactions over the vicar capitular election in Shanghai in the next section of this thesis.

Previous Literature on the Election of the Vicar Capitular in Shanghai

In the last part I have used archival material to illustrate the tendency of Beijing's Catholic policy in 1956 and have argued that Beijing showed willingness to solve the Catholic problem within the church's own framework. In other words, 'papal primacy' and 'canon law' were still neutral signifiers (i.e. not connected with other negative signifiers) in Beijing's discourse up to that time. In this part I shall go on to examine how interaction between Beijing and Rome would affect Beijing's discourse and Sino-Vatican relations.

In 1956, the Diocese of Shanghai, the former 'bulwark of resistance', was in a difficult situation after the arrests of prominent clergy in Shanghai – the diocese was virtually leaderless. In these circumstances, on 15 Mar, the diocesan consultors elected Fr. Francis Xavier Zhang Shilang as the vicar capitular of Shanghai. On 20 Mar, a telegram was sent to Rome notifying Propaganda Fide about Fr. Zhang's election. The event of Fr. Zhang's election initiated the last round of Beijing-Rome interaction in the 1950s and would exert a great impact on Sino-Vatican relations.

As I have discussed before, previous authors usually hold highly critical views regarding Beijing's role in this event. Mariani pointed out that the leaderless situation in the Shanghai Diocese itself was created by Beijing:

‘Having created a power vacuum, the CCP then moved to fill it.’³³⁷ Regarding Fr. Zhang’s election, Mariani argued that the council of priests was convened under duress from the government. He further pointed out that the reason behind Fr. Zhang’s election was his submissiveness – to prove this, he quoted two sentences from a CPC internal document held in the Shanghai Municipal Archive:

‘We created the new leadership of the church. We can control this leader, and we are using different methods to help this church leader gain the believers’ and the priests’ support.’³³⁸

In this excerpt, ‘this leader’ stands for Fr. Francis Zhang. Hence, Mariani based his claim on the word ‘control’ in the excerpt. Apart from the submissiveness of Fr. Zhang, Mariani also highlighted the bluntness of the Shanghai diocese’s telegram to Rome regarding Fr. Zhang’s election. According to Mariani, the telegram was merely a *fait accompli* presented to Rome by Beijing. In sum, based on his interpretation of the rationale behind Fr. Zhang’s election as vicar capitular and on Beijing’s manner of contacting Rome, Mariani argued that the election of Fr. Zhang was merely a step in Beijing’s effort to set up a ‘puppet church’³³⁹ and implied that Beijing’s telegram to Rome was not a genuine act of seeking consultation.

Regarding this historical event, I hold a different opinion from Mariani. Firstly, I do not agree with his interpretation of Beijing’s rationale behind Fr. Zhang’s election. As I have argued in previous chapters, the centre of gravity of Beijing’s Catholic policy since 1952 was ‘winning over’ the high-ranking clergy in China. Hence, although the arrests of church leaders in Shanghai happened in 1955, that was certainly not a desirable outcome for

³³⁷ Mariani, p.169.

³³⁸ Shanghai Municipal Archive, A22-1-233, cited in Mariani, p.169.

³³⁹ Mariani, p.171.

Beijing because it marked the failure of the ‘winning over’ policy. Therefore, the leaderless ‘power vacuum’ in Shanghai should not be regarded as something sought after by Beijing.

Secondly, I think Mariani’s evaluation of Fr. Zhang was oversimplified – was submissiveness the only reason behind Fr. Zhang’s selection by Beijing? I do not think so. The quotation from the CPC internal document was used by Mariani as the main evidence for his claim – however, if we pay closer attention to this quotation, we would find ‘we can control this leader’ was only part of the rationale for choosing Fr. Zhang. The other, and more important, factor behind the selection of Fr. Zhang was that he had the potential to ‘gain the believers’ support’. In other words, the ideal candidate for the government should be one who was able to garner support from local Catholics. Hence, being friendly enough to the government was not the only reason behind Fr. Zhang’s election – the regime was hoping that Fr. Zhang could have some influence over local Catholics and therefore reduce the enmity between Catholics and the government.

In fact, the account from Fr. Jin Luxian, one of the prominent church leaders in Shanghai who was also arrested in 1955, could shed light on the personality traits of Fr. Zhang Shilang – in his memoirs, Jin remarked that Fr. Zhang was ‘virtuous and with a good reputation’ (*de gao wang zhong*).³⁴⁰ Moreover, even Mariani himself noticed that Fr. Zhang Shilang ‘never fully met CCP expectations’ because he was reported to have expressed his sympathy for the arrested Bishop Kung – more evidence showing that submissiveness to the government was not the most important reason behind Fr. Zhang’s election as the vicar capitular of Shanghai. In sum, I argue that Mariani’s oversimplified evaluation of Fr. Zhang does not take all the factors into consideration – the most important reason behind Beijing’s

³⁴⁰ Luxian Jin, *The Memoirs*, p.126.

endorsement was perhaps Fr. Zhang was considered by the government as potentially influential in the Shanghai church and therefore more helpful in 'winning over' Catholics. This was in accordance with Beijing's goal in Catholic policy since 1952.

Thirdly, and most importantly, I do not agree with Mariani's claim that Beijing's intention of allowing the church to send Rome messages was merely presenting a *fait accompli*. Instead, I argue that the telegrams and letters sent to Rome marked Beijing's last attempt to reach a ceasefire with Rome in the 1950s. The Beijing-Rome interaction regarding Fr. Zhang's election as vicar capitular in Shanghai would greatly impact Sino-Vatican relations and was essential to the formation of the second 'deadlock' between Beijing and Rome. In the following part, I shall use archival evidence to prove my point.

Beijing-Rome Interaction over the Election of the Vicar Capitular in Shanghai

As I have discussed above, one of the pieces of evidence used by Mariani to show the lack of sincerity from the side of Beijing was the blunt wording of the telegram sent from the diocese to Propaganda Fide on 20 Mar 1956, consisting of two sentences: 'Bishop Kung Pin-mei has been arrested by the government because of treason. According to Canon 429, article 3, we have made Zhang X X the acting bishop'.³⁴¹ If this was the only message sent by Beijing to Rome, then Mariani's claim of insincerity could be justified because it was clear that the sender of this telegram made no effort to negotiate with the receiver. However, as I have pointed out in the above

³⁴¹ Mariani, p.171.

parts, this blunt excerpt was only a small fragment of the entire message exchanged between Beijing and Rome regarding the election of the vicar capitular in Shanghai. To draw a conclusion merely from this fragment, I argue, is one-sided and facile.

If we look back at the timeline according to the *Shanghai Chronicle* (see p. 284 of this thesis) we would find that the blunt wording quoted by Mariani was actually from Fr. Xu Yuanrong's first telegram to Propaganda Fide (the date was 21 Mar according to the *Shanghai Chronicle*, perhaps due to the time zone difference). Mariani claimed that he quoted the two sentences from an internal document A22-1-233 from the Shanghai Municipal Archive. However, he did not specify whether these two sentences were the entire content of the telegram, or whether there was other content besides these two sentences. Mariani also mentioned the Propaganda Fide's reply to Fr. Xu on 27 Mar, in which Rome stressed that Bishop Kung was 'unjustly imprisoned' and refused to endorse Fr. Zhang's election.³⁴² The problem in Mariani's narrative is that he totally ignores the subsequent interaction between Beijing and Rome from Apr 1956 to Jul 1957. In other words, he hastily reached his *fait accompli* conclusion based merely on two sentences from the Chinese side – it was a pity that he completely missed the underlying constructivist process in the subsequent communication between Beijing and Rome.

Fortunately, the discovery I made in the Hunan Provincial Archive could remedy this major omission. During my research in the archive, I discovered the following material related to the election of the vicar capitular in Shanghai, namely the Propaganda Fide's reply to Fr. Xu (7 Mar 1957), Fr. Xu's letter to Rome (17 Mar 1957), Fr. Zhang Shilang's explanatory letter to Rome (31 Mar 1957) and the Propaganda Fide's final letter (10 Jul 1957).

³⁴² Ibid.

In this section I will provide an in-depth analysis of these texts, which would be the first such attempt in the English language on Sino-Vatican relations.

Fr. Xu Yuanrong's Letter to Propaganda Fide

The full text of this letter (17 Mar 1957) was kept in the Hunan Provincial Archive as an internal document of the Bureau of Religious Affairs (the title of document is 'Fr. Xu Yuanrong from Shanghai, a letter to Propaganda Fide in Rome').³⁴³ As a letter originating from Shanghai, its being included in the Hunan Provincial Archive shows that this document was forwarded by Beijing to bureaus of religious affairs all over China and therefore had national significance. Considering the political situation at the time, it was unimaginable that Fr. Xu could send this message to Rome without Beijing's approval. Hence, despite being written in Fr. Xu's individual name, the letter should be considered as endorsed by Beijing.

The letter was addressed to the prefect of Propaganda Fide, Fumasoni Biondi. It was written in a highly polite style close to Classical Chinese. The telegram has a three-part structure: in the opening part, Fr. Xu expressed the Shanghai diocese's gratitude towards the Pope for the last letter sent to Shanghai by the Propaganda Fide. The second part reported the entire process of Fr. Zhang's election in detail. The third part again expressed the diocese's respect of and submission to the Holy See while seeking Rome's decision on several matters.

The opening paragraph of the letter is worthy of attention:

For the reference of Your Eminence:

³⁴³ Hunan Provincial Archive, 221-1-349.

I feel so underserved that you bestowed the letter with attached order on me (number 1023/57). I have received (them) on the 17th of this month and now I wish to offer this letter to you with deference. The priests and laity of the Shanghai Diocese had been in a perplexed situation for a long time. Hence, when receiving the last letter from your Eminence, they deeply felt the caring love and benevolent arrangements from the representative of Christ and the Most Holy Father; and (now they) know the issues that should be dealt with in the future. Regarding the order from the Propaganda Fide, as long as it is related to the leadership of (our) diocese, I humbly wish to ask Your Eminence's opinion on this leadership issue. Hence, regarding that order, if I may, I wish to promulgate it after receiving Your Eminence's new advice — I hope this request could be granted by Your Eminence.

As we can see from this paragraph, the text of Fr. Xu's letter shows far more nuances than the blunt excerpt quoted by Mariani did. The first point worthy of notice is the style of the telegram. The entire telegram was composed in a conservative form of written Chinese, which exhibits intensive usage of vocabulary from Classical Chinese. When writing in this style, the writer has to pay close attention to the relative social status between himself/herself and the addressee. Different relationships between the writer and the addressee may require radically different wording. This style was the preferred style of the KMT regime. (Hence, the messages sent by Nanjing to Rome were often written in this style, while Rome's messages to Nanjing were also translated into the same style.) However, this conservative style was disliked and abandoned by the PRC government due to its link to the 'reactionary' government of Chiang Kai-shek and to the traditional Confucian social hierarchy. Hence, the fact that Beijing chose to endorse a telegram written in a style preferred by the KMT regime and sent it to Rome —seven years after the founding of the PRC —clearly showed that the telegram was intended to be a soft gesture towards Rome.

The second point worthy of attention is that Fr. Xu, the supposed author, made reference to the last letter and an attached order (No. 1023/57) sent to the Shanghai Diocese by Propaganda Fide. Regarding the attached

order, Mariani had noticed the existence of this 1023/57 order from Propaganda Fide and summarised the main content of this order as ‘giving priests special permission to administer the sacraments with little episcopal oversight’.³⁴⁴ Namely, this order was Rome’s contingent response to the arrest of Bishop Kung and other church leaders in Shanghai. By this order, every priest (not censured by Rome) in the Diocese of Shanghai, including the adjacent Diocese of Suzhou and Archdiocese of Nanjing, would have the privilege to issue marriage dispensations and administer other sacraments in the absence of a functioning bishop. During my research I also discovered the full Chinese version of both the letter to Shanghai Diocese and the attached order 1023/57 in the Hunan Provincial Archive.³⁴⁵ The letter, addressed to Fr. Xu, ordered Fr. Xu to promulgate the order 1023/57 in all the related dioceses and stressed that the rationale behind the order was ‘the unjust arrest and imprisonment of Kung, the Bishop of Shanghai and the Apostolic Prefect of the Archdiocese of Nanjing.’

Indeed, from Beijing’s perspective, this letter with attached order was certainly not a friendly gesture from Rome because the order facilitates the underground existence of the local church, let alone its open denouncement of Beijing’s arrest of Bishop Kung. However, in Fr. Xu’s letter to Propaganda Fide we can see that the author used the wording ‘caring love’ and ‘benevolent arrangements’ to denote the 1023/57 order, which shows that the author did not wish to read the Holy See’s intention maliciously. Nonetheless, the author made a polite refusal to carry out Rome’s order immediately and hoped the Propaganda Fide could take the new information provided in this letter into consideration. In the following part of the letter, Fr. Xu narrated the detail of Fr. Zhang Shilang’s election as vicar capitular.

³⁴⁴ Mariani, p.178.

³⁴⁵ Hunan Provincial Archive, 221-1-349.

To facilitate analysis, the main contents of this telegram are now summarised into chains of equivalence, according to actors:

Chain 1: The Shanghai Diocese and the reason for electing a vicar capitular

The Shanghai Diocese = deeply worried and perplexed = seeking your Excellency's forgiveness for not reporting = not knowing who is the appointed successor = having the urgent need to convene a council of priests and elect a vicar capitular according to Canon Law

This chain of equivalence was derived from the author's description of the situation in the Shanghai Diocese and his explanation of the motives behind electing a vicar capitular. According to the author, the priests and laity of the Shanghai Diocese had been in a worried and perplexed situation for a long time and the Propaganda Fide's latest letter and order to the Shanghai Diocese reflected the Holy See's deep love for the diocese. Then, the author started to explain the reason for electing a vicar capitular after the arrest of Bishop Kung. First, the author sought the Holy See's forgiveness for not notifying Rome before and during the vicar capitular election process: 'During the election of the vicar capitular, we met many difficulties. Hence, before presenting any facts before Your Eminence, we beg for your forgiveness and hope that you would not blame us for not notifying you before the election.'

Second, the author pointed out that it is impossible to know who the successor appointed by Bishop Kung is. According to the author, nobody knew Bishop Kung's choice of successors before his arrest. From 1955, there were rumours that Bishop Kung's choice of successor was recorded in a hand-written note, in which Fr. Lucas Chen Tianxiang was chosen as the 1st successor and Fr. Xu Yuanrong, the supposed author himself, as the 2nd successor. However, those who claimed that they saw the hand-written note also denied that the note had any formal authority. Furthermore, the alleged hand-written note was confiscated by the government during the

arrest of Bishop Kung. Hence, it was impossible to know who the successor named by Bishop Kung really was. According to the author's narrative, some priests suggested Fr. Xu should assume the position of vicar capitular because the alleged first successor, Fr. Chen Tianxiang, was also arrested alongside Bishop Kung. However, Fr. Xu refused this proposal, saying: 'the Bishop never told me anything about his successor and there was no formal document proving he named a successor. How could I assume the power of the diocese?' In these circumstances, as the author put it, as the bishop and other high-ranking clergy of the diocese were prevented from fulfilling their responsibilities for six months, five priests formed a council of priests to elect Fr. Francis Zhang as the vicar capitular. The author claimed their action was according to Clause 3, Canon Law 429.

Here, the reference to Canon Law deserves attention. In fact, despite only quoting two sentences from the telegram, Mariani also noted that 'the CCP attempted to interpret church law for the church'.³⁴⁶ Indeed, in this letter, the author showed great eagerness to persuade Rome that the election of Fr. Zhang Shilang complied with Canon Law. I have summarised the underlying legal reasoning in the letter as below:

(1) The Bishop of the diocese (Kung) was impeded from carrying out his role by imprisonment.³⁴⁷ So efforts should be made to find out who the named successor of Bishop Kung was.³⁴⁸

(2) However, as it was impossible to be sure who the successor really was, Canon 429, Clause 3 would be applicable in this situation: 'These being

³⁴⁶ Mariani, p.171.

³⁴⁷ 1917 Canon Law. Canon 429, Clause 1.

³⁴⁸ Ibid. Canon 429, Clause 2.

absent, or, as mentioned above, impeded, the Chapter of the cathedral church will constitute its Vicar, who will assume governance with the power of a Vicar Capitular.’³⁴⁹

(3) In the case of Shanghai Diocese at the time, the committee of diocesan consultors functioned as the Chapter of the cathedral. As Canon 427 stipulated: ‘The committee of diocesan consultors, like a senate of the Bishop, takes the place of the cathedral Chapter.’³⁵⁰

(4) Five diocesan consultors had participated in the election of the vicar capitular. This had exceeded the minimum number of four consultors stipulated in Canon 425, Clause 1. Therefore, Fr. Zhang Shilang’s election as the vicar capitular was in accordance with Canon Law.

After explaining the rationale and the supposed church law basis underlying the election, the author went on to describe the attitude of Fr. Zhang, the elected vicar capitular, the idea of which can be summarised into the following chain of equivalence:

Chain 2: The elected vicar capitular’s attitude

The elected vicar capitular, Fr. Zhang = believing his election is in accordance with Canon Law and the original intention of the Bishop = thinking he had obtained tacit approval from Rome = assuming the post of vicar capitular with good intentions = always waiting instructions from Your Excellency

With this chain of equivalence, the author tried to persuade the Holy See to trust Fr. Francis Zhang Shilang, the vicar capitular elected by the diocesan consultors. First, the author conveyed Fr. Zhang’s opinion to Rome — Fr.

³⁴⁹ The English translation is quoted from Edward Peters, *The 1917 or Pio-Benedictine Code of Canon Law: in English translation* (San Francisco: Ignatius Press, 2001), p.167.

³⁵⁰ English translation quoted from *ibid.*, p. 166.

Zhang did not 'feel guilty' in assuming the position of vicar capitular for two reasons:

First, Fr. Zhang believed that his election not only complied with Canon Law, but also followed the original intention of Bishop Kung. Fr. Zhang's confidence came from a claim made by Ignatius Zhou, the secretary to Bishop Kung. According to Zhou's claim, Bishop Kung did nominate some potential successors before his incarceration in a formal document (also lost after his arrest), however, in the same document, Kung also instructed that the named successors would only assume that position when an election by diocesan consultors could not be held. Therefore, following this logic, the election result of the council of priests took precedence over appointed successors. Hence, Fr. Zhang believed that his election as vicar capitular followed Bishop Kung's original intention.

Second, Fr. Zhang had goodwill towards Rome. Fr. Xu Yuanrong sent a telegram to Rome immediately after knowing the result of the election. And up to the time of Fr. Xu's 17th March letter, Rome made no explicit objections to Fr. Zhang's election. Zhang took it as evidence of Rome's tacit approval. The author tried to convince Rome of Fr. Zhang's goodwill and loyalty towards Rome: 'I would dare to prove to Your Eminence that Francis Zhang was compelled to assume the position of vicar capitular out of his good will and his concern for the welfare of the laity and our diocese. He is always ready to submit to instructions from the Holy See.'

At the end of the letter, Fr. Xu requested the Propaganda Fide's decision and instructions:

'I humbly ask Your Eminence to judge and decide, and instruct us on the things to be done — Can Francis Zhang continue to assume the post of vicar capitular? If not, then which nominated successor should

take the position? How should we deal with the dispensations issued by Francis Zhang?’

The telegram ended with Fr. Xu’s request for blessings: ‘I humbly express, on behalf of the entire clergy and laity, our submission towards and respect of Your Excellency and the Holy Father. Please grant us your blessings.’

We now need to ask, how might this letter inform us? Throughout this letter, the author was trying his best to convince Rome that the election of the vicar capitular in Shanghai was not intended to be a malicious act towards the Holy See. The author also made huge effort to persuade Rome to endorse Fr. Zhang Shilang as the vicar capitular. It should be noted that at the end of letter the author even invited the Holy See to suggest an alternative should they find Fr. Zhang unacceptable. The language style and wording used by the letter showed deep respect for papal primacy and the Holy See’s authority over the leadership of local churches. Hence, based on these, I argue that the claim in previous literature that Beijing was merely presenting a *fait accompli* to Rome does not hold true. All the traits of this letter showed Beijing’s strong desire to engage in a dialogue with the Vatican over the election of the vicar capitular in Shanghai. Although previous interactions between Beijing and Rome were marked by increasing hostility, in this letter the author used an almost supplicant tone to ask for Rome’s understanding and expressed due respect for papal primacy. Hence, this letter should be regarded as Beijing’s friendly gesture to Rome and its attempt to break the vicious circle of Sino-Vatican relations.

Nonetheless, in such attempt to re-interpret the Canon Law, Beijing may have unintentionally touched a raw nerve for Pope Pius XII. The reason was that the Pope, Eugenio Pacelli, before ascending the throne, had been one of the major architects of the 1917 Canon Law. Beijing’s deed of making use of Canon Law in the face of its creator may arouse the Pope’s personal antipathy. In other words, the Pope, seeing his brainchild being utilised to

the advantage of a secular government, may regard Beijing's attempt as a sign of arrogance, if not adding insult to injury. In fact, this attempt to re-interpret Canon Law showed Beijing's facile understanding of the church's law at the time and may have greatly reduced the effectiveness of this attempt to engage the Vatican.

Despite the insufficient understanding of Canon Law, the most prominent aspect of this letter is the author's effort to solve the issue within the legal framework of the Catholic Church. Truly, as Mariani observed, this can be regarded as the PRC government's effort to 'interpret church law for the church'.³⁵¹ However, based on the evidence of this letter, I do not think such an effort of Beijing was with ill intention. The reference to Canon Law clauses and the underlying legal reasoning in the letter, despite being facile, could be regarded as Beijing's attempt to find a solution that was acceptable and face-saving for both sides. The wording of the letter conveyed a message to the Vatican: the government was still trying to solve the succession crisis in the Shanghai Diocese within the legal framework of Canon Law. If Rome could endorse the proposed candidate (Fr. Zhang), then a face-saving consensus for both would be reached. Even if Rome was not happy with the proposed candidate, it was welcomed to suggest an alternative candidate. In sum, in this way, Beijing expressed its willingness to respect Canon Law and negotiate with Rome for the appropriate candidate for vicar capitular in Shanghai. Hence, on sending this letter to Rome, Sino-Vatican relations had reached a crucial junction – how Rome responded would be hugely influential for the church's fate in China and the relationship between Beijing and Rome in the following decades.

³⁵¹ Mariani, p.171.

The Way to ‘Self-consecrations’: The Subsequent Interaction between Beijing and Rome

Several days after Fr. Xu’s letter was sent to Rome, on 31 Mar 1957, the vicar capitular candidate, Fr. Zhang Shilang himself also sent a letter to Propaganda Fide. This text of this letter is also included in the Hunan Provincial Archive.³⁵² This letter was shorter in length than Fr. Xu’s letter and touched upon the same issues. Thanks to its similarity to Fr. Xu’s counterpart, I will not provide a detailed analysis of Fr. Zhang’s letter here. However, the tone of the letter was more personal – Fr. Zhang, the supposed author, expressed the difficulties he felt in accepting the result of election. (see p.259 of this thesis) At the end of letter, the author expressed his absolute loyalty towards the Holy See: ‘I hereby state that I shall be forever loyal to the Holy See of Saint Peter, and completely submit to, embrace and respect (the Pope’s order). May peace be with Your Eminence.’

According to my archival research, the Holy See did not reply to the two letters until July of the same year. However, an internal circular in the Hunan Provincial Archive, dated 18 May, shows that Rome was still sending anti-Beijing leaflets to the clergy in Shanghai. One leaflet, entitled ‘why the Holy Catholic Church cannot accept the Patriotic Association’, reads:

‘...Not long ago, a Patriotic Association was created in Beijing. The aim of this organisation is to subjugate the church to the atheist government and its ultimate goal is to eradicate the church. For these reasons, the Catholic Church advocates patriotism, but she cannot agree with the Catholic Patriotic Association of the Laity and the creators of this organisation, along with those (laity) who participate. Although the superficial situation (in China) seems to have improved now, in reality,

³⁵² Hunan Provincial Archive, 221-1-349.

Red China has not changed its attitude towards religion. Now, the Chinese clergy and laity will have to make a decision for the future: either they should choose to be loyal to the Holy Church, or they should choose to be pseudo-patriotic. To make a choice is a really hard decision – it seems that to pour out one's blood and become a martyr becomes a better option.'³⁵³

Indeed, the content of this leaflet does not show any friendly signs from Rome. However, Beijing continued to wait for a definitive reply from the Holy See. Finally, on 10 Jul 1957, Rome sent its decision to the Diocese of Shanghai. The Chinese version of this letter is also kept in the Hunan Archive. It was written in the name of the prefect of Propaganda Fide, Fumasoni Biondi. The addressee was Fr. Xu Yuanrong. The full text was as below:

'Despite a delay, your letter (dated 19 Mar) and Fr. Zhang's letter (dated 30 Mar) have reached me and I have read them carefully. In the interest of the church in China and for the salvation of the souls in the Shanghai Diocese, after careful consideration in the face of God, Sacra Congregatio de Propaganda Fide has decided that the initial ruling should be maintained. Hence, you are requested to promulgate the order 1023/57, issued by Propaganda Fide on 1 Mar 1957 in the name and authority of the Holy Father. Effort should be made to make all the fathers know this order.

Please pay careful attention to the privileges granted by the abovementioned order – they should only be given to those fathers in Shanghai Diocese that are in peaceful communion with the Apostolic See. Others are not entitled to these privileges. Moreover, please report to us every case of dispensation granted by Fr. Francis Zhang, so that they can be examined and dealt with. Fr. Francis Zhang had said in his letter that he would forever submit to the Saint Peter's seat full-heartedly and would completely obey, embrace and be loyal to (the papal decision). And you have mentioned in your letter that you will humbly wait for the Holy See's decisions and

³⁵³ Hunan Provincial Archive. 221-1-349. My own translation from Chinese. The original circular has a short comment on the leaflet: 'The Shanghai Diocese has received a sabotage letter. The original letter is written in French.'

faithfully carry them out. In the light of this, I am confident that, on your part, you will carry out the order faithfully. Regarding the fathers in the diocese, (I believe) they will certainly obey all the things stipulated by the order with their sincere piety. We shall deal with the issue regarding the Archdiocese of Nanjing and Diocese of Suzhou as a separate case. Hereby we send our heartfelt greetings to you and wish you all the best.’³⁵⁴

By this letter, Rome gave its final reply to the Shanghai Diocese and the PRC government. From the text we can discern that Rome refused to endorse Fr. Zhang as the legitimate vicar capitular nor follow Beijing’s interpretation of the Canon Law. Moreover, Rome’s letter firmly ordered Fr. Xu to promulgate and carry out order 1023/57, which means the church in China was ordered to continue to boycott the PRC government and maintain its underground presence. Thus, one of the most precious opportunities for a Sino-Vatican ceasefire in 1950 was missed. The relationship between Rome and Beijing took was turning in the worst direction.

When the Propaganda Fide’s reply to Fr. Xu reached the Shanghai Diocese, the CPAL was holding its first conference in Beijing. On 22 Jul, the conference discussed Propaganda Fide’s reply and issued a letter of protest towards the Holy See.³⁵⁵ Now Beijing had largely abandoned hope of reaching a ceasefire with Rome and decided to push forward the ‘self-consecration’ of bishops in China regardless of Rome’s approval. However, Beijing made a final effort before the first episcopal self-consecration. On 24 Mar 1958, a letter was sent from the Diocese of Hankou seeking Roman approval for the self-elected bishop – Fr. Dong Guangqing. As expected, Rome quickly replied and refused to endorse Fr. Dong as the bishop. On 13

³⁵⁴ Hunan Provincial Archive. 221-1-349. My translation from Chinese.

³⁵⁵ Editorial Committee of the Shanghai Chronicle, ‘The Anti-Imperialist Patriotic Movement’ <<http://www.shtong.gov.cn/node2/node2245/node75195/node75203/node75287/node75301/userobject1ai92012.html>> [accessed 15 Sep 2016]

Apr, Fr. Dong was self-consecrated by the officially-sanctioned church as the Bishop of Hankou. Now the relationship between Beijing and Rome had passed the point of no return.

On 12 Apr 1958, the Bureau of Religious Affairs at the State Council issued guidelines on Catholic policy and send it to local bureaus all over China.³⁵⁶ The document instructed officials to push forward self-consecrations and launch a publicity campaign against the Vatican. Among the instructions, these words are worthy of attention:

‘(The situation where) the Vatican utilises Canon Law and other regulations and dogmas to shackle the patriotic laity and clergy should be broken.... The bishops self-elected by the Chinese laity and clergy should have not only the right to govern the diocese, but also the religious authority (due to) a bishop.’

It can be discerned from here that Beijing had adjusted its Catholic policy and no longer attempted to solve the Catholic issue within the legal framework of the church. In Beijing’s discourse, ‘Canon Law’ was no longer a neutral signifier – it was now connected with the idea of a ‘shackle’ that should be ‘broken’. The same document also gave instructions on whether Rome should be notified regarding the consecration of bishops:

‘Regarding whether the Vatican should be notified after the episcopal elections, our view is: in normal circumstances, no. However, if any diocese has a need for struggle,³⁵⁷ they should report to the Bureau of Religious Affairs at the State Council for consideration and approval.’

Hence, at this point, Beijing has abandoned all hope of engaging in dialogue with Rome. According to the document’s instructions, in normal circumstances the officially-sanctioned church would self-consecrate

³⁵⁶ Hunan Provincial Archive, 221-1-72.

³⁵⁷ The meaning of ‘struggle’ (*douzhen*) here is vague. It could be interpreted as ‘a struggle with the Vatican’s interference’.

bishops without even notifying the Holy See — hence, the second ‘deadlock’ of Beijing-Rome relations had now finally come into being.

5.5 Conclusion of the Chapter

In this chapter I have examined four flashpoints, namely the internuncio’s 13-month stay in Hong Kong, the CPC’s internal deliberations on Catholic policy in 1952, the 1954 ‘Year of Mary’ and the 1957 election of a vicar capitular in Shanghai. These events, though having exerted a major influence on Sino-Vatican relations, were largely ignored in previous literature on the topic. With the help of newly discovered archival material, I have brought them to scholarly attention and shed new light on the constructivist process between Beijing and Rome.

A major debate between this thesis and previous literature is on the question ‘did Beijing plan to destroy the Catholic Church in China in the 1950s?’. Based on my archival research, I argue for a ‘no’ answer. Instead, I argue that Beijing’s principal aim in Catholic policy in the 1950s was to rally the church to the patriotic cause, namely to make the church become an active supporter of the government. However, due to Rome’s staunch anti-Beijing stance and the continuing boycott from the local churches, Beijing was frustrated again and again in applying its ‘winning over’ policy and therefore gradually lost good feeling and hope towards Rome and the local church leaders. Nonetheless, despite consistent negative feedback from the Vatican and local churches, for most of the 1950s, Beijing exercised a degree of restraint in its Catholic policy – the internal documents from Beijing frequently admonished local officials that ‘oversimplified and hasty administrative measures’ would hamper the implementation of religious policy. Although keeping a suspicious eye on Rome for most of the time, in 1957 Beijing made a bold attempt to break the vicious circle of Sino-Vatican

relations by seeking Roman approval of the vicar capitular in Shanghai, however, this effort did not result in any positive feedback from Rome.

On the side of Rome, the Holy See's policy towards Beijing during the 1950s did not show many traits of pragmatism and it could be argued that Rome's China policy during this period was simply part of its efforts to fight global communism. To be more specific, Rome's overall China policy was not well tailored for the circumstances in China and could be considered ill-informed and self-contradicting in many cases. This tendency was well illustrated by the papal internuncio's 13-month stay in Hong Kong, where the internuncio's frequent anti-Beijing speeches had totally belied his supposed friendly gestures. After the Nunciature's relocation to Taipei, Rome's policy towards Beijing had become more rigid and uncompromising, and the policy focus was on encouraging the local clergy and laity to be loyal to the Pope and to boycott Beijing's call for patriotism. Rome's hostility towards Beijing caused grave consequences for the local churches – the continued high tension between Beijing and Rome had led to mutual distrust between the PRC government and local church leaders. The church's follow-up of the Vatican's call during the 'Year of Mary' was closely watched by the PRC government and made Beijing lose patience with the local church leaders. The arrest of high-ranking church leaders in Shanghai was a tragic event that resulted from such long-standing Beijing-Rome enmity.

From a discursive perspective, it could be argued that the conflict between Beijing and Rome was largely around three key signifiers, namely 'communism', 'patriotism' and 'schism' and the root of the conflict was Rome's misreading of Beijing's central key signifier 'communism'. The main aim of the Vatican in the 1950s was to defend the Catholic discourse from the threat of state atheism. And in Vatican's understanding at the time, this atheism was an inseparable part of communism. Hence, to defend Catholicism, the church must fight communism. However, in dealing with China, Rome did not perceive the significant difference between Beijing and

other communist regimes – in the 1950s, the focus of Beijing’s state discourse was on Chinese patriotism and nationalism instead of on ‘eradicating capitalism’ and ‘class struggle’. A failure to perceive this crucial difference had led Rome to believe that to avoid a ‘schism’ in China, ‘communism’ in China, including the CPC, must be battled against. However, as we can see from the analysis of the internal documents from the side of Beijing, the PRC government did not have any interest in modifying the church’s creeds and dogmas, nor did it plan to lead a religious revolution. Therefore, Rome was raging a war against the wrong opponent and for the wrong reason – the Holy See thought that it was fighting ‘communism’ in China, however, in reality, it was actually attacking ‘patriotism’ which was hidden under the central signifier ‘communism’ in Beijing’s discourse. This misreading had led to many unnecessary clashes between Beijing and Rome.

At the end of this chapter, I have examined in detail the constructivist process between Beijing and Rome before the 1958 episcopal ‘self-consecrations’ in China. My argument in this chapter is that Beijing’s attempt to contact Rome regarding the vicar capitular in Shanghai between 1956 and 1957 should not be considered as presenting a mere *fait accompli*. Instead, as shown by the archival evidence, Beijing had endorsed Shanghai Diocese’s soft and suppliant letter to Rome and invited the Holy See to engage in a dialogue over the suitable leader of the Shanghai Diocese. In these letters, Beijing had shown its willingness to solve the problem within the legal framework of Canon Law. However, Beijing’s gesture of interpreting the church’s law for the church may have had unintended consequence of irritating the Vatican since Pope Pius XII was one of the main architects behind the Canon Law of the time. On the other hand, Rome failed to notice Beijing’s desire to reach a ceasefire and failed to utilise this desire to the church’s interest. The subsequent ‘self-consecration’ without Roman approval should be regarded as Beijing’s retaliation towards Rome’s

coldness. In other words, this second ‘deadlock’ in the contemporary Sino-Vatican relations was the result of the unfriendly interaction between Rome and Beijing from 1956 to 1958, instead of something long planned by Beijing.

Looking back at the history now, I argue that the Vatican missed an important historical opportunity in 1957, when Beijing showed a genuine wish to reach some consensus with the Holy See regarding the appointment of the Vicar Capitular in Shanghai. In fact, as we can perceive from the archival evidence, even up to 1957, ‘papal primacy’ and ‘Canon Law’ were still neutral signifiers in Beijing’s discourse and had no negative connections. In other words, Beijing had hoped to keep the Vatican’s spiritual leadership in the Chinese church and wished to solve the Sino-Vatican conflicts within the church’s own framework. Had Rome replied to Beijing with some conciliatory gesture, or at least ceased the anti-Beijing instructions to the church in China, Sino-Vatican relations would have headed in a different, and certainly better, direction. Although we cannot predict ‘what would have happened had they behaved differently’, I argue it was highly likely that Beijing and Rome could have reached some tacit consensus regarding the episcopal appointments in the Chinese Church – if so, the second ‘deadlock’ between Beijing and Rome would not have been formed at all and Sino-Vatican interactional history in the subsequent decades could have been rewritten.

6. Conclusion

6.1 Findings: Substantive Level

The question of this thesis is why the Vatican and China severed diplomatic ties in the 1950s to the extent that more than 60 years later they still have not realised a rapprochement. I have argued that an understanding of Sino-Vatican relations from 1949 to 1958 is indispensable to understanding the contemporary Beijing-Rome interaction because today's clashes between Rome and Beijing are actually the continuation of a long-standing stalemate rooted in the 1950s. Hence, in order to provide a fresh insight into the seeds of this long-standing stalemate, this thesis attempts to address this question from a constructivist perspective and aims to find out how PRC-Vatican interactions impacted on their respective identities, and influenced their relationships in the first nine years of the People's Republic.

My substantive findings in this thesis, in a nutshell, could be summarised into three points. First, the rigid view of identity in previous studies on Sino-Vatican relations in the 1950s prevents a deeper understanding of this relationship and has led to unbalanced reports. The actual Beijing-Rome interaction in the 1950s showed more nuances than the rigid view of 'communism vs theism' could offer. To avoid such a rigid view of identity, this thesis advocates a 'non-identitarian' social constructivist approach based on in-depth discourse analysis. Second, contrary to what is asserted by many previous authors, based on archival evidence, I argue that Beijing's policy towards the Catholic Church in the 1950s should not be oversimplified as 'destroying the church'. Instead, the PRC government's primary aim in the 1950s was to rally the church to the cause of nationalism/patriotism and make the church an active supporter of the government. Third, the Beijing-Rome interaction in the 1950s is not pre-determined. Instead, it is a long

constructivist process spanning nine years where both Beijing and Rome had engaged in multiple rounds of identification processes. Despite their radical difference in state ideologies, Beijing and Rome did not automatically attack each other in their first encounter and coexisted peacefully for a year. Indeed, the initial policy goals of both sides were simple and not inherently hostile towards each other. However, due to oversimplifications in religious policy and ill-informed diplomatic gestures, the tension between Beijing and Rome gradually increased and finally resulted in many 'flashpoints'. The final outcome of their interaction in the 1950s was worse than expected by both sides.

In chapter 2, I have firstly provided a concise review of the general situation in previous literature on Sino-Vatican relations. According to my point of view, previous works on Sino-Vatican relations could be roughly divided into three categories, namely martyrdom literature, biographies and studies from an IR perspective. The majority of previous works belong to the category of martyrdom literature, and very few books were dedicated exclusively to the study of Sino-Vatican relations from an IR perspective. After the concise general review, the thesis draws the reader's attention to the key works on Sino-Vatican relations that are most related to my current study. To be more specific, Myers's *Enemies without guns*, Mariani's *Church Militant* and Chen and Jiang's *Sino-Vatican Diplomatic History* were milestone works in this area and they cover the same historical period (1948-1958) to be studied in this thesis. While acknowledging their important contributions to this field, this thesis argues that an obvious shortcoming could be found in their works. Namely, previous literature shares a highly rigid view of identity in their interpretation of Sino-Vatican relations – Beijing was regarded as a brutal, anti-religious 'communist' regime while the Vatican was regarded as an innocent victim. I argue this rigid view of identity has led to several flaws in previous accounts of Sino-Vatican relations. Taking the books of Myers, Mariani, Chen and Jiang as examples, I discussed the negative implications

caused by this rigid view of identity – namely, the malevolent readings of Beijing’s Catholic policy; the one-sided and biased account of church history in the 1950s; the ignoring of historical sources from the side of the PRC; the hasty conclusions based on scanty evidence and the strong pro-Vatican tendency. I think all these flaws are not conducive to a deeper, balanced and rational understanding of Sino-Vatican relations in the 1950s. Hence, to achieve a better insight into Beijing-Rome relationships, we need to dismantle this rigid view of identity and take a new approach to the study of Sino-Vatican relations – the constructivist process between Beijing and Rome should always be taken into account.

Chapter 3 is dedicated exclusively to methodological discussions. Sections 3.1 and 3.2 endeavour to build a bridge between mainstream IR theories and Sino-Vatican relations, which, I believe, is the first attempt in studies of this field. In section 3.1 I discussed the ‘statehood’ of the Vatican and argued that despite the peculiarities and religious characteristics of the Holy See, the Vatican should be regarded as a state in its dealing with the PRC. Afterwards, in section 3.2, I introduced readers to the fundamental tenets of the three major schools of IR studies (realism, liberalism and constructivism) and discussed their respective relevance to the study of Sino-Vatican relations. Firstly, I drew readers’ attention to the basic concepts (power and *Realpolitik*) of realism and used these concepts to examine Sino-Vatican relations – I have argued that Rome’s power over opinions should be taken into account and that the Vatican is far from powerless in its dealings with Beijing. Moreover, despite the fact that the concept of *Realpolitik* seems to explain the clashes between Beijing and Rome, it actually misses many nuances in Sino-Vatican relations and could not explain changes. After discussing realism, the thesis went on to examine liberalism’s relevance to Sino-Vatican relations. My main argument in this part is that the fact that the PRC is not a Western-style liberal democracy should not be regarded as the origin of every problem in Sino-Vatican relations, while the conflict

between Beijing and Rome should not be simplified as ‘a war between an authoritarian regime and democracy’. In the last of section 3.2 I proceed to discuss constructivism, which is the theoretical foundation of this study. I have provided an overview of Alexander Wendt’s theory, which is the most influential version of constructivist IR theory. My argument here is that Wendtian theory’s focuses, namely on the power of ideas, interactions between states, identity-casting and the possibilities of changes, fit the aim of my thesis very well. Hence, among the three mainstream IR schools, I argue that constructivism is most suitable for this study.

After choosing the school of constructivism as the approach to be used, this thesis started to examine the concept of identity, which is crucial to any research based on social constructivism. I pointed out that Wendt’s view of identity is a ‘weak point’ of his theory, which needed to be supplemented by Brubaker and Cooper’s critique. According to Brubaker and Cooper, the traditional notion of identity has inherent essentialist connotations and therefore may hinder constructivist analysis. In the light of this, they argued that alternative terms such as identification, categorisation and self-understanding should be used in place of ‘identity’. I agreed with Brubaker and Cooper and argued that the use of these alternative terms in this thesis would certainly be helpful to a better understanding of Sino-Vatican relations. Hence, in this thesis, I will use Brubaker and Cooper’s alternative terms to describe the constructivist process between Beijing and Rome. However, in limited cases I opted to retain the term ‘identity’ to denote ‘a point in the ongoing constructivist process’ in Sino-Vatican relations.

The next section is dedicated to the discussion of the concept of ‘discourse’. As the entire process of identification is mediated via discourse, the analysis of discourses between Beijing and Rome will certainly give us deeper insights into the dynamics of Sino-Vatican relations. After briefly reviewing the origin of the term ‘discourse’ in social sciences, I provided the definition of ‘discourse’ in this research – ‘a language system and the only way to

perceive identity'. Based on this definition, I proceeded to develop a suitable analytical framework to carry out discourse analysis. In section 3.4, I developed a four-step model as the guidelines for analysis, which is based on Laclau and Mouffe's discourse theory. My analytical model is centred on the concept of 'chain of equivalence' as proposed by Laclau and Mouffe. In section 3.5, I explained my rationale for choosing the period 1949-1958 as the research target and argued that this period is the most important period in Sino-Vatican identity articulation. Then I acknowledged the sources I used in this research – the majority of historical sources were from the Hunan Provincial Archive and most of them have never been revealed before.

After chapter 3, I started to carry out substantive research and analysis. In chapter 4 I discussed the first two years of Beijing-Rome interaction and shed light on the first 'flashpoint', namely the expulsion of the papal internuncio from China. In the two years leading to this incident, the two states experienced their first encounter and started to articulate their respective identities. Both states were trying to adapt to the new situation in China and figure out what kind of role was being played by each other in this relationship. Beijing voiced its concern over foreign leadership in the church in *Correct Understanding* and called on the Christians take back control of the churches in China. The thesis went on to analyse a key document from the same time period, namely the PRC's temporary constitution, the *Common Program*, and discussed how it expressed the priority of state construction and key concerns. After the discussion of the two key documents issued by Beijing, the thesis proceeded to examine the *Manifesto on Independence and Reform*, which marks the start of the 'three-self' movement in the Chinese Catholic Church. The general message of the first document was rational and benign while the latter one showed a more militant stance towards the church's foreign connections. I have argued that regarding these documents as mere propaganda texts is an

oversimplification. Instead, they are Beijing's important expression of self-identification at the beginning of its interaction with the church and the Vatican. In these texts, Beijing had clearly announced its dislike of the leadership of the foreign missionaries in the church and sent a crucial message to the Vatican: that the current situation where foreign missionaries led the Chinese Church could not be continued.

Facing the new regime in China, the Vatican's response to Beijing was not helpful to the survival of the church in China. After the establishment of the PRC, the Vatican chose to 'stay in China' and ordered the bishops to remain in their posts. However, the internuncio's continuing stay in Nanjing reflected the Vatican's ambivalent China policy – on the one hand, the internuncio's stay in mainland China could be regarded as a friendly message to the new regime; on the other hand, the internuncio's passive attitude towards Beijing belied this friendly message. Beijing later on interpreted Riberi's stay in China as the West's effort to interfere with China's internal affairs. The sudden break of the Korean War became the 'acid test' of Sino-Vatican relations. The war put the new regime directly at war with the US, the strongest power of the times. In these circumstances, the Vatican's internuncio misjudged the prospect of communist rule in China and expressed sympathy for the KMT regime and local churches did not cease to spread pro-KMT messages. From the pamphlets distributed by local Catholic churches at that time, we can see that both the local church and the Vatican made no attempt to disguise their pro-KMT and anti-Beijing stance. All these greatly alerted Beijing and led the new regime to believe that the church was an ally of the West and the KMT regime. The subsequent crackdown on the church in China was the inevitable consequence of the Vatican's misjudgement and inability to distance itself from the KMT regime. The expulsion of the internuncio was Beijing's gesture of defiance towards Rome. It marked the total breakdown of official channels between Beijing and Rome. After the expulsion of the internuncio,

Beijing quickly confiscated the church's institutions in the areas of education and charity-work. The foreign missionaries were expelled from China and the church suffered huge losses of personnel and assets. When evaluating this period, I argue that the Vatican's self-conflicting and cumbersome diplomacy in the face of the new regime in Beijing was the important reason behind the breakdown of relationships between Beijing and Rome.

The first part of Chapter 5 examined several relatively 'silent' flashpoints in Beijing-Rome interactions from 1952 to 1954. In contrast to the expulsion of the internuncio, these flashpoints were 'hidden conflicts' between Beijing and Rome that were largely overlooked by previous scholars. With the newly discovered archival evidence, this thesis shed light on these forgotten moments of Sino-Vatican interaction and revealed for the first time the PRC's internal guidelines for Catholic policy. The first flashpoint to be examined was the papal internuncio's activities in Hong Kong after his expulsion from the Chinese mainland. Making use of archival material, this thesis analysed Beijing's internal evaluation of Archbishop Riberi's 13-month stay in Hong Kong. The second flashpoint was Beijing's efforts to clear the Chinese church of foreign influence and its setbacks. To illustrate this process, this thesis provided a detailed analysis of a formerly 'top secret' document – Lu Dingyi's internal address to the officials of religious bureaus. The third flashpoint to be examined was the Pope's call to worldwide Catholics to observe the 'Year of Mary' and Beijing's internal evaluation of this. It shows the persistence of 'a priori definitions' in Sino-Vatican relations and how the Vatican's messages, even those intended to be religious in content, exerted political implications on the self-understanding of Chinese Catholics and finally affected Sino-Vatican relations.

Rome persisted in its non-compromising stance towards communism and the Chinese government. In messages towards Chinese Catholics, loyalty towards Rome was always stressed and the martyrs were highly praised. Therefore, while there was no direct channel of communication between

Rome and Beijing, the church in China became an 'arena' where both sides fought each other over influence. The so-called 'Catholic resistance' started and the priests loyal to Rome made many efforts to boycott Beijing's effort to transform the church. On the other hand, looking from Beijing's perspective, these six years were a period where the government tried its best to win over the Chinese clergy (especially the bishops and archbishops). This thesis argues that Beijing's primary aim was to make the Chinese church become a supporter of the government instead of destroying the church. However, Beijing's effort was largely hindered by Rome and the pro-Vatican priests. In this situation, Beijing finally lost patience and resorted to coercive measures.

At the end of chapter 5, this thesis examined the flashpoint where the second deadlock in Sino-Vatican relations was finally formed, namely the 'self-consecration' mechanism in the officially-sanctioned church in China. After the arrest of Bishop Kung and other prominent clergymen in 1955, 'Catholic resistance' died down and the last phase of Sino-Vatican interactions in the 1950s started. Due to the heavy loss of institutions, assets, priests and other personnel, the Chinese Church was in serious crisis and suffered from a dire shortage of active bishops. In deep mutual distrust, the interaction between Beijing and Rome, lacking any direct channel, focused almost entirely on their rivalry over influence on the Chinese Church. The Vatican, facing the shortage of bishops in China, continued to encourage the growing secrecy of the church by granting privileges to the local priests and delegating a portion of bishops' responsibilities to them. The Vatican's instructions and directives to the Chinese Church were closely monitored by the Chinese government and deepened the mutual distrust between Rome and Beijing. Despite the enmity between the two sides, in 1957 Beijing made a bold attempt to break the vicious circle in the event of the appointment of a vicar capitular in Shanghai. Based on archival evidence, this thesis argues that Beijing had

made a genuine effort to persuade the Vatican to accept a candidate trusted by Beijing. However, Beijing's facile understanding of the Canon Law and Rome's stern refusal made the situation go from bad to worse. Beijing finally decided to disregard papal authority and push forward the 'self-consecration'. Thus, the second 'deadlock' of Sino-Vatican relations was constructed by their interactions.

6.2 Findings: Discursive Level

In the above section I have reviewed the major substantive findings of this thesis and pointed out that Beijing should not be regarded as the sole 'culprit' in Sino-Vatican relations and Rome should shoulder some responsibilities for the formation of the two deadlocks. Now I shall bring this conclusion to a deeper level and discuss the discursive root of Sino-Vatican conflicts. To put it very briefly, my conclusion is that the conflicts between Beijing and Rome resulted from misreading of each other's central key signifiers in state ideologies.

On the side of Rome, the Holy See's rigid view of the central key signifier 'communism' in Beijing's ideology led to grave consequences in Rome's China policy. Beijing, as a regime ruled by the CPC, had picked 'communism' as the central signifier in state ideology long before the foundation of the PRC. However, after 1949, this central signifier was connected with ideas of 'patriotism' far more than with ones of orthodox communism. The CPC's focus on patriotism and nationalism had deep roots in China's previous humiliation in front of the colonial powers and long-suppressed national pride. In the face of this, Rome did not sense this important discursive difference between China and other countries ruled by communist parties – the Vatican simply regarded China as 'another communist regime' that was inherently hostile towards religion and did not

carefully analyse what actually lay under the key central signifier 'communism'. In other words, Rome did not notice that in Beijing's discourse 'patriotism' was far more central than 'atheism'. This made the Vatican's China policy in the 1950s overly focused on preserving the purity of the church in the face of the 'communist' and atheist threat rather than adapting to the new government's call for patriotism and addressing Beijing's desire for security.

In Beijing's discourse there was a dichotomy between 'patriotic' and 'reactionary'. Similarly, in Rome's counterpart, there was also one between 'atheism' and the 'Catholic faith'. Both 'patriotism' and 'atheism', as signifiers, were connected to the central key signifier 'communism'. Hence, whenever the PRC tried to promote patriotism, the signifier 'communism' was inevitably invoked. This, when perceived by the Vatican, would entail the concept of 'atheism' – the archenemy of the Catholic faith. Hence, from the discursive perspective, the Vatican's oversimplified view of the PRC's version of communism became the origin of the subsequent misunderstandings and the church's conflict with Beijing. To be more specific, for Beijing the dichotomy was 'patriotic vs reactionary'; for Rome it was 'atheism vs Catholicism'. Initially, these signifiers are not necessarily connected with each other, but now due to the central key signifier of 'communism', Rome regarded Beijing's 'patriotism' as the equivalent of 'atheism' within the mind-set of the Cold War – this oversimplification bears huge consequences for later conflicts. With the continuous negative feedback from Rome, in Beijing's political discourse, the Vatican was gradually connected with the signifier 'reactionary' and the dichotomy of Beijing's Catholic policy became 'patriotism vs the Vatican'.³⁵⁸

³⁵⁸ I argue that the clash between Beijing and Rome is indeed similar to Wittgenstein's 'The parable of the beetle', which was a famous thought experiment devised by him in his work

On the other side, Beijing also made mistakes of oversimplification in understanding Rome's central key signifier 'Catholicism' at the beginning of the 1950s. To be more specific, in the early stage of the PRC's religious policy-making, Beijing did not pay enough attention to the difference between 'Catholicism' and 'Christianity' and treated the two signifiers as largely the same thing. This undifferentiated treatment brought forth negative results and contributed to the vicious circle between Beijing, Rome and the church in China. In the context of the Korean War, Beijing was concerned about the close ties between the local Christian churches with the West and hoped to impose the signifier 'patriotic' to church discourse and make 'patriotism' a part of Chinese Christians' self-understanding. Indeed, Beijing's desired outcome of this discursive intervention was this: The Christian Churches should not only accept the signifier 'patriotism' into their discursive system, but also understand that being 'patriotic' meant that the CPC's secular rule over China should be accepted and supported. To realise this, Beijing started to promote the 'three-self' movement in both Protestantism and Catholicism and regarded 'three-self' as the equivalent of 'patriotism' and an acid test for the churches in China. The initial success of the 'three-self' movement in Chinese Protestant churches greatly encouraged Beijing, who then believed that a similar success could be easily replicated in the Catholic Church.

However, the government's hasty promotion of the two signifiers, namely 'three-self' and 'reform', in the Catholic Church caused unexpected consequences – the Catholic discourse was far more sensitive to these two signifiers than her Protestant counterpart, as they had strong connotations

Philosophical Investigations. It depicts a situation like this: two (or more) people met each other, and each person holds a non-transparent small box labelled 'beetle' in his/her hands. Everyone thinks that s/he is holding a beetle and all the people are holding the same thing. So they start to talk about each other's 'beetle' and it seems everybody understands what the others are saying. However, when they open each other's box together, they discover that in fact the boxes contain other creatures rather than beetles (e.g. snails, worms, crickets, mice). In the case of Sino-Vatican conflict, the 'beetle' is the signifier 'communism'.

of a religious 'Reformation' and schism. In view of this, the Vatican was on high alert and assumed that Beijing was planning a schism following the style of Henry VIII. Therefore, in its China-related discourse, the Vatican expended huge efforts to reiterate the importance of loyalty to the Pope (papal primacy) as a tenet of Catholic faith. This was to counteract the perceived schism perpetrated by Beijing. Under the Vatican's instruction, the Chinese Church refused to cooperate with the government and boycotted Beijing's call for 'patriotism'. The Vatican's deed, in turn, greatly irritated Beijing and the two sides started to exchange fire. In fact, Beijing soon realised that the signifier 'reform' was doing a disservice to its Catholic policy and quickly revised its strategy to focus exclusively on 'patriotism' – however, the damage had already been done. Now Beijing, Rome and the local church have already been locked into a vicious circle.

Despite the formation of antagonism in the respective discourses of Beijing and Rome, this research, based on the analysis of internal documents, finds that Beijing still showed pragmatism in its religious discourse and made efforts to leave some discursive space for the church in China. In spite of the enmity between Beijing and Rome, in the internal documents Beijing reiterated that the aim of Catholic policy was not to destroy the church, but to promote patriotism in the church. In other words, Beijing took care not to create an antithesis between 'patriotism' and 'Catholicism' in discourse – the ideal outcome was that the Catholic Church, especially her central key signifier 'Catholicism', could be kept in China but with the signifier 'patriotism' (i.e. the support of Beijing's rule over China) fully incorporated into the church discourse.

In this way, Beijing had taken an approach different from the creation of the Church of England. The central key signifier 'Catholicism' was deliberately conserved in China and Beijing strove to incorporate it into the national discourse of 'patriotism'. However, this brought to Beijing the tricky problem of papal primacy – if Beijing chooses to keep the signifier 'Catholicism', then

it logically entails 'papal primacy' in global Catholic discourse, which enables the Pope to exert his influence on the self-understanding of Chinese Catholics. In other words, by opting to share a common key signifier 'Catholicism' with Rome, Beijing left a permanent discursive space for Rome to intervene.

Different from the English Reformation where the English state chose to develop a church discourse completely devoid of Rome's influence, in the Chinese case Beijing still engaged with Rome within the same system of church discourse. The two sides were still contesting in the same discursive field and no one could ever reach absolute hegemony in this 'discursive arena'. Interestingly, contrary to popular belief, archival evidence shows that 'papal primacy' and 'Canon Law' were still neutral signifiers (i.e. not connected to negative meanings) as late as the year 1957 in PRC discourse despite the continuous negative feedback from both the local church and Rome. The PRC's key internal documents issued from 1952 to 1957, which were analysed by this thesis, showed Beijing's long-standing desire to realise state interests within the framework of church tradition and Canon Law. Beijing's 1957 letters to Rome regarding the issue of the vicar capitular in Shanghai were the regime's last attempt to maintain 'papal primacy' and 'Canon Law' as neutral signifiers in church discourse. Unfortunately, this reconciliatory gesture became futile due to Beijing's facile understanding of church law and the Rome's uncompromising stance. Greatly angered by Rome's reaction, Beijing was finally convinced that 'papal primacy' and 'Canon Law' were threats – they became 'shackles' for their capability to impact on the self-understanding of Chinese Catholics and should be purged from the officially-sanctioned church discourse.

To conclude, the oversimplified understanding of each other's central key signifiers in Beijing-Rome interaction led to grave consequences in Sino-Vatican relations. Based on my archival research, I argue that the discourses between Beijing and Rome were not necessarily incompatible

with each other at the beginning of their interaction. To be more specific, 'patriotism' does not necessarily conflict with 'Catholicism' while 'three-self' was not inevitably incompatible with 'papal primacy' and 'Canon Law'. The meanings of all these key signifiers were not unchangeable. Depending on how one 'decodes' another's signifier and how one acts towards each other, the meanings of every key signifier in state discourses could be constantly modified, contested and re-interpreted. In fact, from the history of Beijing-Rome interaction, we can see that it took almost a decade for the two sides to establish the two 'deadlocks' in their discourse, namely 'the KMT regime as the legitimate government of China' and 'self-consecration as the only acceptable way of creating bishops' – neither of the two deadlocks was inevitable. Had they carefully analysed what the exact meanings hidden under key signifiers were in each other's discourses, Sino-Vatican history would have been rewritten. However, unfortunately, both Rome and Beijing had missed many historical opportunities in the course of nine years and they realised the worst possible outcome at the end of their interaction in the 1950s.

6.3 Towards a Better Relationship

In the last two sections I have summarised the major findings of this research, on both the substantive and discursive levels. So, based on these findings, what can we say about the old question of 'why has rapprochement still not been reached'? I think the answer is clear: because they continue to misunderstand each other's central key signifiers (i.e. 'communism' and 'Catholicism') in their state ideologies. Paradoxically, although both Beijing and Rome attempted to prevent the creation of a schismatic church in China, their interventions in the Chinese Church in the 1950s, under the influence of such misunderstanding, actually brought the church to the brink of schism. In the light of this, the possible contribution of this case study to

IR theory and discourse theory is that key signifiers in a state's discourse do matter as they may cause serious misunderstandings and oversimplification by other states. To avoid such misunderstandings, it is essential to precisely analyse the meaning of the ideological key signifiers in interactions and diplomacy.

After the 1958 'self-consecrations' in China, Sino-Vatican relations came to their worst point. In June 1958 the Pope issued the encyclical *Ad Apostolorum Principis* to Chinese Catholics, in which he bitterly accused Beijing of consecrating the bishops without a papal mandate. Beijing retorted with a fierce publicity campaign against Rome. Later on in the same year, Pope Pius XII passed away and Chairman Mao launched the Great Leap Forward in China. In these circumstances, the interaction between Beijing and Rome came to a halt and the Vatican lost all contact with the Chinese Church. After a long interval of nearly two decades, the two sides finally resumed their dialogue. As I have discussed in chapter 4, despite the efforts made by both sides and many positive signs, the long-standing stalemate and the two deadlocks continue to trouble Sino-Vatican relations and a rapprochement is still not realised. Hence, how could the findings of this research inform today's Sino-Vatican relations and make contributions to a future reconciliation?

According my point of view, although the global context and the respective situation of both China and the Vatican have changed greatly in the past 60 years, interactions between Beijing and Rome still have not broken the vicious circle formed in the 1950s. So what could they do to improve relationships? Based on the findings of this thesis, I have some advice for the policymakers of both Rome and Beijing.

On the part of Rome, the Holy See should analyse the PRC's state discourses more carefully and pay more attention to their nationalist/patriotic content. In fact, in the contemporary PRC political

discourse, the importance of Mao-era 'revolutionary' signifiers has been greatly reduced. However, if there is one thing that has not changed a lot from the beginning of the PRC to this day, it is the signifier 'patriotism'. In fact, over the past 60 years, the signifier 'patriotism' has never faded in Beijing's discourse. No matter how the key central signifier changed in PRC state discourse (for example, from 'communism' to 'economic development' and then to 'Chinese Dream'), the signifier 'patriotism' has always been an important part of state ideology. It should be noted that 'patriotism' in Chinese state ideology not only demands citizens' love for traditional Chinese Culture, but also their active support of Beijing's rule over China. Hence, if Rome simply interprets 'patriotism' in PRC discourse as 'love for Chinese culture', that will be far from enough – indeed, the Popes since the 1980s have all expressed their deep feeling for Chinese culture and reiterated that 'a good Catholic also loves his/her country'. However, such expressions may not be very effective as a reconciliatory gesture to Beijing – because Beijing's desired version of 'patriotism' demands loyalty and support from citizens of the PRC. If the Vatican could be more explicit in encouraging Catholics in China, as PRC citizens, to support Beijing's rule, it would certainly have a very good effect in promoting the rapprochement between Rome and Beijing.

Furthermore, the Vatican should pay attention not to provoke Beijing unnecessarily regarding the signifier 'patriotism'. This point could be best illustrated by the Vatican's canonisation of Chinese Saints in the year 2000. Originally intended to be a conciliatory gesture towards China, this event turned out to be another flashpoint between Rome and Beijing. The problem lay in the selection of saints to be canonised – most of them had died in the Boxer Rebellion (1899-1901), where large numbers of Catholics in China were killed by the anti-Christian 'boxers' (peasant militias). In fact, from a Catholic perspective, the Vatican's decision to canonise these martyrs could be justified because they died for their Catholic faith. However, in terms of

Beijing-Rome relations, the entire Canonisation was extremely ill-advised – the historical event of the Boxer Rebellion (the *Yihetuan* Movement in Chinese) was highly regarded in PRC state discourse and was regarded as an exemplar of Chinese patriotism. In the official discourse at the time, the ‘boxers’ were long portrayed as national heroes who laid down their lives to defend China from Western colonialism. Hence, the Vatican’s canonisation of these saints will certainly constitute a challenge to the PRC’s patriotic discourse. As if to make things worse, the Vatican chose 1 Oct as the date of canonisation – that day is the same day as the PRC’s national day. Hence, it is not strange that Beijing became furious about the Vatican’s canonisation. Briefly, the 2000 canonisation incident provoked Beijing unnecessarily, which clearly showed that the Vatican did not have a thorough understanding of the importance of ‘patriotism’ in PRC discourse. In the future, it is hoped that the Vatican could avoid such diplomatic mistakes and encourage Catholics in China to build a better relationship with the government.

On the part of Beijing, my advice is that the PRC government should be more proactive in engaging the Vatican and be bolder in promoting Sino-Vatican reconciliation. Indeed, it could be argued that in Sino-Vatican relations, Rome needs China more than vice versa. The number of Catholics in today’s China, according to different estimations, varies from 5.5 million to 12 million – the absolute number of Catholics in China is indeed large (more than the number in Ireland). Hence, the Holy See could never ignore such a large number of Catholics in its state policy. By contrast, considering the vast population of China, Chinese Catholics only account for a tiny percentage of the total population of China (less than 0.5%). Hence, in Beijing’s policy making, it can be expected that Catholic policy constitutes only a small part of the overall state policy. And from Beijing’s perspective, the importance of Sino-Vatican relations may never rival other relationships (say, Sino-American, Sino-Japanese relations). Despite these

facts, I argue that being more proactive in Sino-Vatican relations is still in the great interest of Beijing. In dealing with the Vatican, Beijing should not overestimate the Vatican's 'threat' in China – considering the fact that the Holy See was already quite careful and prudent in speaking to China in recent years. On the other hand, Beijing should be confident that today the vast majority of Catholics in China, including the clergy, are loyal to the PRC government and are willing to actively support Beijing. Apart from this, Beijing should also avoid a rigid view of the Vatican as a staunch 'anti-Beijing power'. Indeed, among high-ranking clergy both globally and inside the Vatican there are many voices who are friendly to Beijing.

In fact, this thesis argues that both Beijing and Rome should realise that they have already reached a tacit consensus regarding the church in China: there is indeed only one Catholic Church in China. This tacit consensus means that Beijing acknowledges that the Church in China is also part of the universal Catholic Church; while Rome also considers the officially-sanctioned church in China as a form of Catholic presence in China. In other words, China no longer forces Catholics to sever ties with Rome while Rome no longer regards the officially sanctioned church as a 'schism'. To put it briefly, each side acknowledges that 'there is one Catholic Church' but allows different interpretations from each side. This research maintains that this tacit consensus could form a basis for future dialogues between Beijing and Rome.

The foundation of the 'one church' consensus is the shared signifiers between Rome and Beijing concerning the church in China. As discussed in this thesis, quarrels and conflicts often occurred in interactions between the two states, but this consensus was formed as early as the 1960s, when Beijing announced that the Chinese Church 'should obey the Pope regarding the teachings that should be believed and should be performed' and when Rome ceased to apply the term 'schism' to the Chinese Church. In other words, despite the initial and subsequent clashes, both states

perceived that sharing the key signifier 'genuine Catholicism' is in their best interests. Endorsed by Beijing, the officially sanctioned church leaders reiterated again and again that 'they belong to the universal church'. Beijing also allows the Chinese Church to follow Rome's teachings as long as they are perceived as non-political and often tends to welcome the visits of foreign priests. On the other hand, the Vatican also draws benefits from this common signifier and uses it to exert influence on Chinese Catholics. In fact, the Vatican's efforts to reach Chinese Catholics (e.g. papal messages) were based on the assumption that there is no 'schismatic church' in China. Rome's actions of sending aid to seminaries run by the officially sanctioned church also shows that it still regards them as part of the Catholic Church. In sum, from the interactions between the two states it can be perceived that a tacit consensus indeed exists – the oneness of the church is acknowledged by both sides and their policies almost never deny this principle.

While sharing the common signifier of 'genuine Catholicism', both sides have different interpretations of it. For Beijing, that means 'the church led by patriotic priests'. Hence, the Chinese government always reiterates that 'patriotism' is one of the prerequisites of priesthood and the church needs to comply with Chinese laws and regulations. In Beijing's discourse, the Patriotic Association is defined as a 'mass organisation' that acts as a bridge between the government and the Catholic priests and masses. It facilitates communication between Beijing and the local churches and helps the application of Beijing's policies (including aid given by the government to the church). According to Beijing, the CPA by definition is not a religious institution and therefore does not compromise the 'Catholicity' of the Chinese Church. Hence, with this interpretation, Beijing claims that the officially-sanctioned church is also part of the worldwide church, adhering to genuine Catholicism. On the other hand, Rome also offers its own interpretation of this shared signifier. According to Rome, the Chinese

Church also belongs to the universal Catholic Church thanks to her ties with the Roman Pontiff. The Popes, in their speeches and letters towards Chinese Catholics, have always stressed the importance of papal primacy and of the church's communion with Rome. All the above facts show that the tacit consensus allows different interpretations from Beijing and Rome and both sides can give their own definitions to the common signifier 'genuine Catholicism'.

To put it briefly, Beijing and Rome have constructed a tacit consensus of 'one church', which allows them to seek common ground while keeping different interpretations. From the nature of such a consensus, it is not hard to notice that it is highly similar to the '1992 consensus' between Beijing and Taipei, namely the 'one China' principle. With the '1992 consensus', both Beijing and Taipei agree that 'there is only one China' but interpret the signifier 'China' differently. For Beijing, 'China' equals 'People's Republic of China' and Taiwan is a part of the PRC; for Taipei, 'China' stands for the 'Republic of China (ROC)' which was established in 1911 and whose government continues to exercise sovereignty in Taipei. Despite the radical differences between their respective interpretations, both sides consent to share a common key signifier 'China' in their discourses. Indeed, today the '1992 consensus' has already become the cornerstone of cross-strait (Beijing-Taipei) interactions and cooperation.

A careful analysis of the '1992 consensus' is beyond the scope of this conclusion. But a few glances at it here would show how the two previous enemies could maintain peaceful coexistence and carry out meaningful cooperation by simply sharing a common signifier. In fact, the Beijing-Taipei conflict was far more dangerous and complicated than the Beijing-Rome counterpart. Despite all these difficulties, the '1992 consensus' proved to be an effective way to de-escalate the Beijing-Taipei conflict and promote peace and cooperation across the Taiwan Strait. Since 2008, Taiwan's ruling party, the KMT, has openly accepted the '1992 consensus' and used

it as the guideline of the KMT government's policy toward Beijing. Beijing quickly replied with friendly gestures and the tension across the strait was swiftly relieved. With this consensus, Beijing and Taipei signed over 40 agreements on many issues, including direct flights and mail across the strait, closer economic ties and cooperation in fighting crimes. During the eight years of KMT rule, the tension between Beijing and Taipei dropped to the lowest level in 60 years. In 2016, the leaders of both sides of the strait, Xi Jinping and Ma Ying-jeou, met each other in Singapore and hence realised the first meeting of such a kind in the interactions between Beijing and Taipei, which was unimaginable a decade ago. During the meeting, Xi and Ma addressed each other as 'Mister' instead of 'President', which loyally reflected the '1992 consensus' and showed respect for each side's interpretations. Despite the fact that the '1992 consensus' falls short of Beijing's desired aim for cross-strait relations (unification), Taiwan had indeed used this consensus to de-escalate the tension across the strait and find a way to co-exist peacefully with its former sworn enemy. With this consensus, Taiwan had also secured its fragile international space by reaching a 'diplomatic ceasefire' with Beijing. In sum, by simply sharing a common key signifier 'China', Beijing and Taipei had successfully defused 'the time bomb of East Asia' and realised peaceful coexistence.

Considering the similar nature between this and the tacit consensus between Rome and Beijing, the success of the '1992 consensus' should be noted by the policymakers from both Beijing and Rome with the hope of future rapprochement. It is hoped that both Beijing and Rome could be more proactive in seeking a formal consensus and realising a face-to-face meeting between the Chinese President and the Roman Pontiff in the near future.

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